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RHETORIC--THEORIES FOR APPLICATION, PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE 1965 CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH.

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THESE 14 PAPERS EMPHASIZE THE VARIETY OF CURRENT THOUGHT ABOUT RHETORIC AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH MODERN RHETORIC IS EXPLOITING NEW INFORMATION AND RESEARCH. THE EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION DEFINES THE RECENTLY REVIVED ART OF RHETORIC IN TERMS OF ITS PURPOSES AND TYPES, AND THE PAPERS THEMSELVES DEMONSTRATE THAT MUCH OF WHAT IS NOW HERALDED AS NEW IN THE FIELD IS ACTUALLY OLD AND THAT MUCH CAN BE LEARNED FROM FORMULATIONS OF THE RHETORIC OF THE PAST. THESE PAPERS EXAMINE--(1) THE CONTEMPORARY PERTINENCE OF RHETORIC AND SEMANTICS TO COMPOSITION, (2) THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMPARABLE ORAL AND WRITTEN MESSAGES AND HOW BOTH SHARE THE RHETORICAL "STANCE," (3) THE DANGERS OF USING PRESCRIPTIVE CLASSIFICATIONS IN PARAGRAPH COMPOSITION AND STYLE ANALYSIS, (4) RHETORICAL ANALYSIS APPLIED TO LITERARY CRITICISM AND TO THE EXPLICATION OF POEMS AND POETIC STRUCTURE, (5) THE APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC FIELD THEORY TO RHETORIC, TO LANGUAGE, AND TO LITERATURE, (6) THE RELATIONSHIP OF RHETORIC TO OTHER DISCIPLINES, AND (7) NEW APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF RHETORIC AND TO EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM PLANNING. (THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, 508 SOUTH SIXTH ST., CHAMPAIGN, ILL. 61820, $1.75, ORDER NO. 31600.) (JB)

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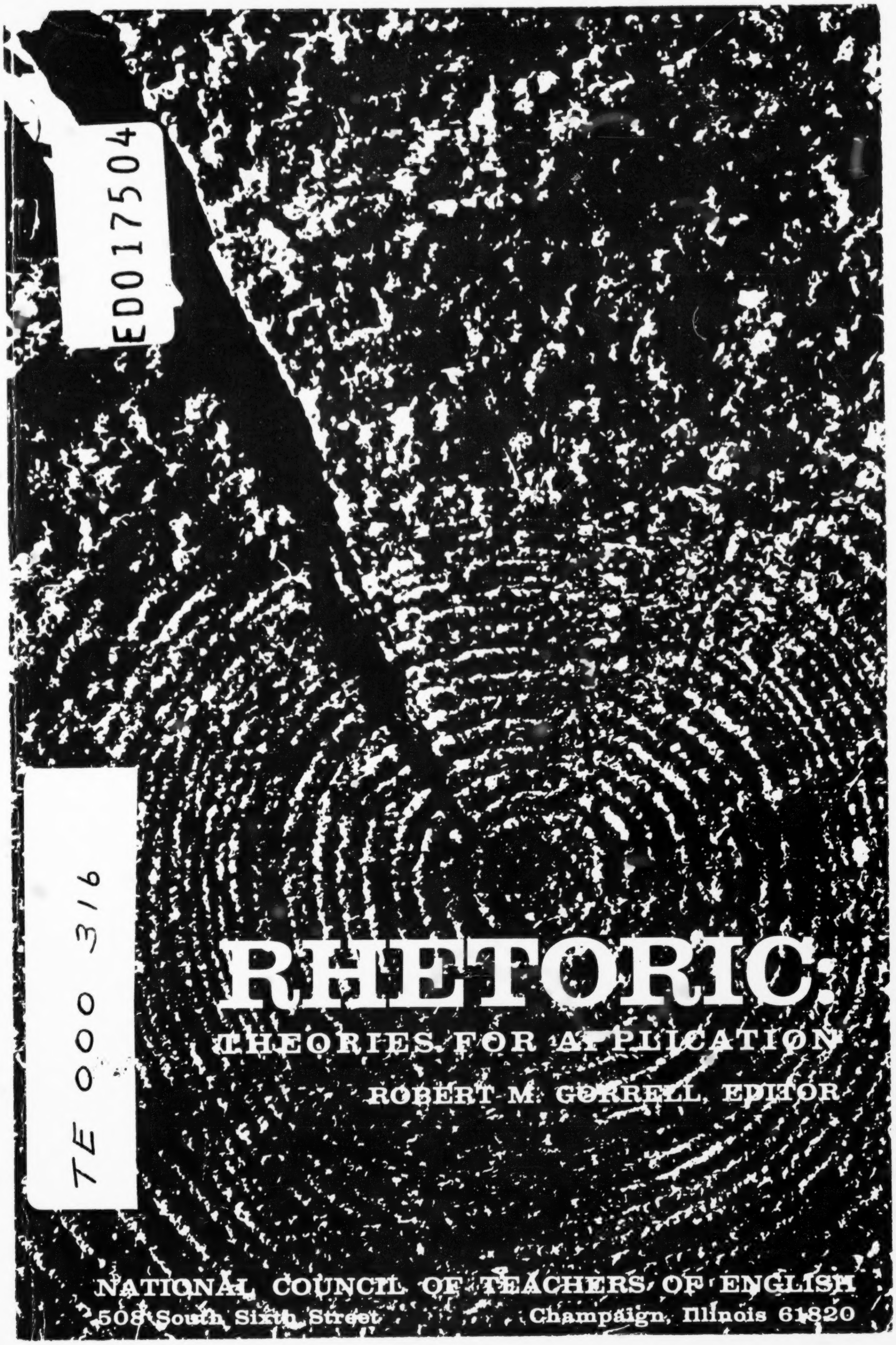

RHETORIC:

THEORIES FOR APPLICATION

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the National Council of Teachers of English

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CONTENTS

Introduction
Robert M. Gorrell, University of Nevada 1

Rhetoric, Semantics, and Composition
Eleazer Lecky, University of Southern California 5

A New Look at Old Rhetoric
Edward P. J. Corbett, Ohio State University 16

Traditional Misconceptions of Traditional Rhetoric
P. Albert Duhamel, Boston College 23

Some Preliminaries to English-Speech Collaboration in the Study of Rhetoric
Carroll C. Arnold, Pennsylvania State University 30

The Paragraph: Dancer in Chains
Virginia M. Burke, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee 37

Field and English
Edward R. Fagan, Pennsylvania State University 45

Field Theory and Literature
William Holtz, University of California, Santa Barbara 53

Against the Typology of Styles
Louis T. Milic, Columbia University 66

Swift and the Rhetoric of the Anglican *Via Media*
James J. Stathis, Vanderbilt University 75

Teaching the Rhetorical Approach to the Poem
Sam Meyer, J. Sterling Morton Junior College 82

Rhetorical Analysis and Poetic Structure
Robert M. Browne, University of Montreal 90

An Exercise in Prose Style
Walker Gibson, New York University 99

Teaching Rhetorical Analysis
Richard Braddock, University of Iowa 107

Rationale for a New Curriculum in English
James Moffett, Harvard Graduate School of English 114

Introduction

Robert M. Gorrell

> She was long deaf to all the sufferings of her lovers till one day, at a neighbouring fair, the rhetoric of John the hostler, with a new straw hat and a pint of wine, made a second conquest over her.
>
> —Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*

Rhetoric, as the art of persuasion, endured with prestige and assurance from Aristotle to John the hostler as a central discipline in education. The discipline enjoyed the advantages of recognized definition, intricate classifications, and tradition. As eighteenth century rhetoricians began extending the limits of the definition—with Blair's applications of rhetoric to belles lettres or Campbell's discussion of rhetoric as "the grand art of communication, not of ideas only, but of sentiments, passions, dispositions, and purposes"—the neatness began to disappear. Faced on one hand with the new diffusion of their discipline and on another by the practical demands of the classroom, nineteenth century rhetoricians tended to resort to oversimplification and prescription. Less dedicated than their predecessors to broad generalizations about virtues like perspicuity or elegance, they dwelt on the forms of discourse, emphasized rules for good usage, and developed formulas for arrangement. Their efforts toward practicality had pedagogical advantages, but also helped to cage the discipline in the limited traditions of the college speech course or dilute it in mass producing freshman English programs, where it remained in its much-lamented dreariness.

The new enthusiasm for rhetoric is a welcome antidote for the old sterility. As the essays collected here illustrate, it is at least pushing the subject in a variety of directions. But with this new freedom rhetoricians are again plagued by problems of definition. As new purposes, new types, and new media of communication develop and as related disciplines like linguistics and logic progress, rhetoricians puzzle about how much their subject encompasses—or whether indeed they have a legitimate or useful separate discipline.

Quite apart from the sense in which *rhetoric* is used to castigate, or occasionally praise, politicians and after dinner speakers—in the sense of overoratorical, artificial, often empty speech—the term has complicated uses. For example, *rhetoric,* like *grammar,* is applied to the material, the stuff, as well as the study of it. Thus, when we speak of Swift's rhetoric, we are thinking of qualities or characteristics of his prose; when we speak of classical rhetoric, we are thinking of a discipline—a body of generalizations or precepts about how language works. These provinces of the term overlap, and obviously both senses are useful, but the double application of rhetoric can produce confusions.

Even when considered only as a label for a kind of study or discipline, however, *rhetoric* presents problems. First, *rhetoric*, usually expanded to *rhetorical analysis,* is used to describe what happens in a piece of writing, to analyze the techniques and methods whereby discourse achieves its ends. Several of the following essays are rhetorical in this sense, discussing how general principles can be applied to writing or analyzing specific compositions to discover general principles. Rhetoric, in this sense, has traditionally concerned expository prose, but it is being applied more and more to imaginative writing, sometimes not easily distinguishable from what is usually called literary criticism. Curiously, in this analytic sense, we tend to apply rhetoric primarily to units of composition longer than the sentence; for analyzing the individual sentence we have *grammar* or *syntax.* When applied to the sentence, *rhetoric* usually involves questions of effectiveness or appropriateness, not how the sentence is put together or the rules for generating sentences, although the distinction is sometimes fine. In most ways, *grammar,* as a description of how sentences work, is analogous to *rhetorical analysis* applied to the paragraph or the essay or the novel. It might be useful to think of the grammar of the paragraph or to have a term like *grammar* to apply to longer units, but we do not.

In a second sense, *rhetoric* refers to whatever body of generalizations, or principles, or prescriptions for composition we can assemble. In this sense, the term is usually restricted to expository prose; we use terms like *creative writing* or perhaps sometimes *style* if we talk about methods of producing successful imaginative literature. Materials of rhetoric in this sense are widely inclusive—Aristotle's topics, Blair's mistaken dogma about metaphor, general precepts about the uses of the periodic sentence for emphasis, schoolbook advice that paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence and close with a "clincher," whimsical prohibitions of initial *and* or a final preposition. Rhetoric, as a study of how to compose, inevitably includes also principles from logic, semantics, and linguistics, including the study of usage. The principles develop from observation and analysis of what happens in writing, but also subjectively, from individual conclusions about what is logical or beautiful or neat.

Recent rhetorical study has attempted to develop principles objectively. That is, scholars have examined typical bodies of material in some detail to test traditional principles or accumulate evidence for new generalizations about writing. Their investigations can lead to generalizations about such topics as the frequency of adverbial sentence openers in modern prose, the popularity of the periodic sentence, or the consistency with which writers of modern prose begin paragraphs with topic sentences. Theoretically, analysis of adequate samples extensively pursued could produce accurate and complete rhetorical generalizations about the prose of any period. Such generalizations would be valuable; they might provide information that could produce a kind of generative grammar for longer units of writing. On the basis of analyses of paragraphs, for instance, one can imagine a set of rules similar to those of existing grammars of the sentence: "a paragraph may be written as topic sentence plus specific illustration plus . . ." It is hard to predict how extensive the variations on such formulas would have to be. But even if all the possibilities could be systematized, the "rules" for generation would not provide the practical principles or guides needed for composition. Or, to consider another sort of analysis, if statistics were to show that in modern prose only two percent of the sentences are periodic, one could not proceed to a principle that a writer should use periodic sentences only two percent of the time. Analysis is necessary, but it is not the end for rhetoric. The problem of choice remains.

And for many modern rhetoricians the problem of choice is fundamental. That is, the peculiar provenance of rhetoric, what establishes it as a discipline, is its focus on how a writer is to select among available instruments of discourse. Grammar, for example, describes the available ways of generating sentences; rhetoric attempts to develop principles to guide the writer in choosing the kinds of sentences he needs, to select from what grammar shows to be available. A study of usage describes variations and may reveal information about the origins and linguistic environment of particular locutions; rhetoric makes use of all such information, applying it to the problem of selection.

Rhetoric therefore draws extensively on information from linguistics, from analysis of writing, from literary criticism, from logic, from psychology; but it uses this information in a particular way, because selection requires anticipating results. The rhetorician finds more and more difficulty in propounding prescriptions—the advice is either so general that it is useless or it admits so many exceptions that it is misleading. As an alternative the rhetorician can attempt to guide selection by trying to show what the effects of a choice may be. He does not tell the writer to avoid passive sentences or use passive sentences sparingly; he rather attempts to describe the particular circumstances in which the passive sentence is useful and to predict the effects the pattern will have. His concern, if a meaningful catalogue of ways of producing paragraphs develops, will be to assess the relative merits for different situations of the different methods.

Rhetoric, then, can be thought of as a study of selection among available means of discourse. Selection requires anticipating effects, and therefore the rhetorician needs to use all available information about how language works. He needs also to pay renewed attention to the stance, the attitude of the writer, and the context of the discourse, including the intended audience. The variables multiply, and it is inevitable and perhaps desirable that many new approaches to rhetoric should develop. It is also apparent that new rhetorics are likely to be neither simple nor precise, although modern advances in linguistic studies increase the chances for precision.

The papers collected here emphasize the variety of current thought about rhetoric and the extent to which modern rhetoric is exploiting new information. They also demonstrate that much of what is heralded as new is old, and that much can be learned from formulations of the past. The collection includes examination of the contemporary pertinence of classical rhetoric as well as exploration of applications of modern field theory to rhetoric. It includes discussions of the relations among rhetoric and other disciplines, applications of rhetoric to literary criticism, and practical suggestions for using rhetoric in the classroom. The papers were all presented as part of a sequence on rhetoric at the 1965 Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English. They indicate at least that the ancient discipline of rhetoric has some contemporary vigor.

Rhetoric, Semantics, and Composition

Eleazer Lecky

The amplest literary treasure in any thrift shop, and the most melancholy for teachers of English, is likely to be its collection of books on how to write. Most of their titles will be stamped with such words as *fundamentals* or *principles, handbook* or *guide, logic* or *thinking, patterns* or *techniques, writing* or *composition.* Depending on vintage, *expression, communication, rhetoric,* and even *semantics* can be their shelf-fellows. *New* and *modern* will be perennial. And the odds favor the presence of one or two across the board titles like *Composition: A Course in Writing and Rhetoric* and *Modern Rhetoric and Usage for College Composition and Communication.*

Yet it would be as unwise to judge these books by the fashion of their titles as by their covers, since the references of too many of the words are tangled. Nor does "Rhetoric, Semantics, and Composition" give me a clear title to the office of critic. I intend, rather, with occasional backward glances, to examine the pertinency of rhetoric and semantics—the more controversial studies—to composition at present. After inquiring into the meanings often assigned to these key terms, I shall suggest what, in the context of a freshman course in college composition, the chief uses of rhetoric and semantics may be, and whether they may be compatible. My recommendations nowhere aspire to the status of a program or syllabus.

Of the key words, *composition* is the least troublesome. For our profession it means the practice and the theory of putting together or organizing words into larger units of discourse normally in prose. We sometimes refer to composing a speech, but such a speech, memorized or not, will require a script. Porter Perrin, in discussing "Freshman Composition and the Teaching of Rhetoric," limited the meaning of composition to "actual writing in courses" as contrasted with principles of discourse or rhetoric.[1] To be sure, theory and practice are separable. Furthermore, we need not apologize for encouraging a purely theoretical interest in any of the chief kinds of language study. Yet a teacher of composition, though aware of imbalances favoring either practical skill or theoretical knowledge, tries somehow to enchant theory into practice. And the economy of usage which Perrin neglected allows composition to mean process, or product, or principles, whether the genius is a painter or a musician (composer of musical compositions) or a freshman (writer of compositions). This sort of linguistic laissez-faire governs hundreds of words, including *grammar* and a tribe in *-ic* or *-ics,* two members of which should no longer need an introduction. I shall therefore treat composition as the theory and practice of writing prose, and college composition as a freshman course in that subject.

Since the connotations of composition are nonpartisan, they require no review. The connotations of rhetoric and, as we shall see, of semantics are by comparison often disconcerting. The theory of rhetoric, Dr. Johnson once called "that vast and confused heap of terms, with which a long succession of pedants had encumbered the world."[2] As for rhetorical practice, Ezra Pound found occasion to say that it is "the art of dressing up some unimportant matter so as to fool the audience for the time being."[3] In fact, the association of rhetoric with the artificial, the superficial, and the meretricious—illustrated by the phrase "mere rhetoric"—is popular. On the side of the angels, Richard Weaver believed that "when we finally divest rhetoric of all the notions of artifice which have grown up around it, we are left with something very much like Spinoza's 'intellectual love of God' "[4]—a lofty association resembling the one between rhetoricians and God's "Ministers" which Thomas Wilson made in his *Arte of Rhetorique* over four hundred years ago. In controversies of this kind, whether about poetics or rhetoric, the arguments tend to polarize. The attackers magnify abuses; the defenders concede the existence of evil but hold that it is accidental rather than essential: the essence they are defending is pure and perfect.

The denotations of rhetoric are not so simple. People disagree about the scope and function of a subject as intangible as this or semantics. Rhetoric is not acoustics or calligraphy with fairly objective criteria. Both *semantics* and *rhetoric* ought to be treated as plurals. For both, an unabridged dictionary has to record concentric, intersecting, and tangential denotations. It must note historical changes, but it will necessarily omit minority views within a period, say the period of "classical rhetoric."

Whereas magic and witchcraft and the visual arts can all be conceived of as rhetoric, our province is the rhetoric of language. In the beginning verbal rhetoric took in only spoken discourse or oratory. Later it widened its domain to include written discourse, a sense kept by Daniel Fogarty in *Roots for a New Rhetoric.*[5] For most rhetoricians, however, it has split again, with speech departments and English departments dividing the territory, English departments often using rhetoric interchangeably with prose composition as I have defined it. This is a modern sense of the word. In his *Modes of Rhetoric,* Leo Rockas says: "Rhetoric has meant the art of persuasion, of decoration, and of composition. The first meaning is classical, the second medieval and Renaissance, the third modern."[6] Like composition, rhetoric is not limited to theory but extends to practice, whether process or product. Molière's M. Jourdain would no doubt have been pleased to learn that he had been writing rhetoric.

At a less general level, rhetoric refers to only some types of composition. Most rhetoricians feel that significant writing does more than express: it communicates. "Rhetoric," according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* is "the art of using language in such a way as to produce a desired impression upon the hearer or reader." Written language in this category is shared, and, presumably, it is discussible by public standards. If, say the rhetoricians, it is adapted to the writer's purpose (or his end or ends), it will produce the desired impression. It will "communicate . . . effectively to . . . a reader," as Francis Connolly said, in *A Rhetoric Case Book.*[7]

Rhetoric, from this point of view then, is an art. It turns grammatically correct sentences into good, effective prose. Since, however, what is good for one purpose may not be equally good for another, there may be more than one kind of good, effective communication. Classical rhetoric, affiliated with oratory, specialized in one of them—persuasion—whose purpose is to move an audience to assent and action (effects that can be fairly well recorded).

"All use of language," it has been said, "is persuasive."[8] Ordinary language freely mingles affective with cognitive elements. Orderly patterning of information implies that the pattern is correct, alternatives having been excluded at least for the present. A writer who interprets data usually justifies his conclusions. Still, differences of degree are significant. Though we know that the kinds of discourse which since the nineteenth century have been called "persuasion, description, narration, and exposition" blur at the edges, as do their factual and imaginative forms, we know that sometimes writing is relatively informative *or* persuasive in effect. Only writing with a strong persuasive purpose do we classify as persuasian. Of the imaginative forms, fiction, for instance, is not a branch of persuasion, despite what Wayne Booth calls in the *Rhetoric of Fiction* its "recognizable appeals to the reader."[9] Nor is drama, even if many contemporary plays break through the fourth wall to the audience. (Lyric poetry, as Mill said, exists not to be heard but overheard.) To return to more literal forms, there is, or there should be, a difference between a news report and an editorial, for instance. Basically, description conveys the look of things, narration a succession of events—each from a point of view more or less objective or subjective. Expository writing seeks to explain facts and opinions. Persuasion may use exposition and the other forms, but to the end of persuading.

College rhetorics—treatises and collections of readings—usually give some space to the characteristic effects of the various forms of discourse, occasionally including imaginative uses. It has been customary, nevertheless, to star exposition. One recent text, that includes description and autobiography, says: "The study of expository writing is known as rhetoric. Rhetorical study examines the purposes and sources of different kinds of exposition. . . ."[10] But there is a growing tendency to revive classical rhetoric and thus enlarge persuasion's part, whether by casting it as a species of exposition, by starring it, or by transferring its lines to the old star. The result may well be a confusion or reduction of effects, and uncertainty about the writer's obligation to the reader. It will be my obligation to return to the problem.

Regardless of the kind of effect, rhetorical theory seeks to achieve it by careful and thorough planning. At each of the three stages outlined by classical rhetoric—invention (finding and developing a topic), disposition (organizing or shaping the materials), and style (phrasing)—the writer must be resourceful. He works downward from the largest form (his unifying idea), through the smaller forms (its structure), to the smallest ones (the texture of sentences and words). His composition, as a product, will have a proper beginning, middle, and end.

A discipline so comprehensive begins to look self-sufficient. Still it has ties with the other formal disciplines of the trivium—grammar and logic. As we have seen, rhetoric presupposes and seeks to transcend mere grammatical correctness. As we shall see, it uses logic, sometimes questionable logic, to explain and persuade. Perhaps ties connect it also with semantics, to which grammar and logic are not irrelevant either.

Semantics, like *rhetoric,* is sometimes a dirty word. Loosely, according to *The Standard College Dictionary,* it means "verbal trickery." It has also been associated with scientism and escapism. On the other hand, it has been regarded as a secular form of salvation.

Semantics, Englished in 1900, is an upstart word compared with *rhetoric.* It first denoted the study of change of verbal meaning like the referential shift for *extravagant* from out of bound to excessive. It then developed into a study of meaning in all its aspects (nonverbal included) and thus acquired additional denotation. As John Locke pointed out, meaning is an interrelationship among the members of a triad—things, thoughts, and words. These are the corners—signs, reference, and symbols—of the triangle of meaning sketched by Ogden and Richards. Symbols, therefore, as Charles Morris's semiotics explains, function simultaneously in three possible kinds of relationship: (1) to signs, (2) to other symbols, and (3) to their users. The first, which is philosophical or scientific, concerns the accurate matching of words and empirical data. The second has to do with the interpretation of any verbal code, with all its logical, linguistic, and literary conventions. The third is psychological and sociological, or behavioral, having to do with the interactions between words and the thinking, feeling, and acting of individuals and groups. It has been studied especially by General Semanticists, following Alfred Korzybski. Of course, all three kinds of relationship are man contrived.

Although the word *semantics* is new, meaning is not. The rhetorical approach to composition has not been meaning-less. And, conversely, modern semantic theory has not disregarded rhetorical effect, although it has sometimes disdained traditional rhetoric. I. A. Richards, for instance, attempting a revolution of the word, said in *The Philosophy* *of Rhetoric,* "the whole business of Rhetoric comes down to comparisons between the meanings of words. . . ."[11] Then, in *Interpretation in Teaching,* he undertook to overhaul the rest of the trivium too. Some rhetoricians have thought, as Porter Perrin did, that rhetoric is fully competent for composition. For him, "the rhetorical approach to subject matter" helps "put matters of surface finish in proper perspective" by "considerations" of "accuracy, definiteness, completeness (relative to scale and purpose), consistency, discrimination of fact from opinion, and the treatment of other facts and points of view" (p. 125). Other rhetoricians agree with Wilbur Howell, who said in an essay on "Renaissance Rhetoric and Modern Rhetoric," "Perhaps as philosophers and rhetoricians develop their present interest in semantics, a way will be found to create a new logic for the process of communication and to bring logic and rhetoric together in a more significant companionship. . . ."[12]

I think that it is unimportant which banner flies. Let a course in composition make use of the best of both disciplines—semantics and rhetoric. Often there is no contradiction. We have amphibious studies of prose style (Swift's, Austen's, Shaw's, Hitler's). Yet risking oversimplification, we may contrast the typical emphasis of one on effect with that of the other on meaning. A way of doing this—nonprocrustean, I hope—is to bring together the three semantic relationships (symbol to sign, to symbol, and to person) and the three rhetorical stages in composition (invention, disposition, and style).

The symbol-to-sign relationship is both fundamental and highly problematical. It has provided issues to trouble metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and linguistics. What are signs? What are symbols? How do symbols differ from signs and (to anticipate) from one another? Nothing is self-evident. Fact and inference blend. Perfect answers are beyond us. But a writer who is insensitive to the difference between words and things can not well resist rationalizing instead of reasoning. If he can not recognize degrees of abstracting or levels of experience—if he confuses opinions with states of affairs and does not discriminate between a judgment about value and one about truth—he is more apt to project his wants and fears.

Traditional rhetoric has placed itself both at and on the writer's side. To assist him in invention, it reminds him of categories, i.e., of the many varieties of similarity-dissimilarity, and of contiguity by which we catalogue experiences and construct arguments. According to Richard Weaver's summary of these ancient topics, they include genus (or definition), cause and effect, circumstance, similitude comparison (according to degree), and contraries.[13] The system is formidable and potentially very useful. It is positive. It can stimulate thought, activate writing. But it is also potentially very dangerous. It fails to mention that categories are subjectively formed. It does not clarify how definitions of some kinds of word, *iron, exist,* vary from others, *irony, existentialism.* It encourages ignoring differences on the assumption that what is usually the case is always the case and that, by

Aristotle's *artistic* proofs, the probable may be made plausible. And it may erode the distinction between words and things. Weaver, for instance, was pleased that "names persist in spite of all the cautions of modern semanticists, in being thought of as words for substances."[14] The consequence of such an approach to composition is freer verbalizing, less responsibility to fact. When the writer turns reader, he may be equally uncritical. He may be like the great majority of the high school students who in 1962 took the Advanced Placement Examination in English. According to William E. Coles, Jr., they saw no "connection between rhetoric and the distortion of experience [in texts]; . . . The best they could do was to object to some of the phraseology as 'slangy' or 'in bad taste' without giving any indication of what might be wrong with either, or what it could lead to."[15]

Semantics, concerned about interpretation, has customarily started with finished texts whose full and precise meaning must be understood. Thus semantics has been less interested in the process of writing than of reading; it has taken the reader's side, informing him, warning him, defending him—even against himself; its service to a writer is perhaps more cautionary than constructive. Yet semantics can challenge the writer to rethink his position instead of immediately entrenching himself behind fixed ideas which he must defend. It can help him to recognize disputes over words. It can show him that language and thought are so closely interconnected that phrasing is more than a matter of style, to be attended to after the inventing and disposing have been completed; and that metaphor is more than a pleasing departure from familiar language. Semantics, then, can reduce the margin of error in rhetorical invention.

Semantics can at this point also be constructively helpful to a writer faced with the task of defining terms. He will know that he is defining words (according to usage and in the light of referents), not defining referents. He will be alert to the force of context and the pull of arbitrary definition (as in "Juvenile delinquent: anyone under twenty arrested twice or more") and of persuasive definition using *really* or one of its synonyms (as in "naturalism: really romanticism on all fours").

Since we construct verbal definitions by replacing a word with words, the process involves also a relationship of the second or symbol-to-symbol variety. This is a more formal relationship, whether the conventions are basically grammatical, logical, or literary. The acceptability of a specific pattern of symbols will be determined by its self-consistency within a formal code. At the grammatical level, the morphology and syntax must be within the permissible range of variation for the occasion At the logical level the test is the structural congruity of propositions—their validity rather than their correspondence with physical reality. And at the literary level, literary conventions of all kinds, from the length of sentences and paragraphs to means of unifying a whole discourse, apply. Toward this relationship, rhetoric and semantics are differently oriented.

Rhetoric has had more to say than semantics has about *composing* sentences, paragraphs, and longer units of discourse. Traditional rhetoric, though sometimes mistaken and prescriptive, has emphasized formal craftsmanship in writing, while semantics, primarily interested in the viability of the product, has worried about the meanings of the words. Now, if rhetoric has not always transcended grammatical correctness, it has not underrated it. If it has needlessly multiplied distinctions, for example, among figures of speech (see the elaborate apparatus described in Sister Miriam Joseph's *Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time*[16]), it has required intellection. Nevertheless, as Marie H. Nichols has pointed out in *Rhetoric and Criticism*,[17] rhetoric has lacked an adequate hypothesis about verbal symbols. Too often, it has atomized, dividing form from use (the syntax of compound and complex sentences from their logical effects), word from context (invoking the "proper meaning" doctrine).

According to semantic theory, attention to contexts of all sorts—physical, psychological, social, and, of course, verbal—is imperative whether we are reading or writing. A sentence like "People get hurt" has descriptive form, but under certain circumstances its message predicts, threatens, and prescribes. More often a writer must depend on the interplay of words to control meaning. The immediate verbal context, he sees, is of the greatest importance. Delicate connotative and denotative variations keep words from being strict synonyms or antomyms. The word *value* has one meaning in "market value" and another in "to understand the price of everything and the value of nothing." In fact, such comparisons (extending to definition by verbal substitution) and contrasts (extending to negation) also raise questions about the identity of referents and the parity of terms that rhetoric seldom does. Is *republic*, for instance, irreconcilable with *democracy*, as we are being told? These words also happen to be abstract. Since, however, all words are in a sense abstract and also in a sense figurative, what distinguishes abstract from concrete and figurative from literal ones? And are literary symbols—sun, crown—and constructs—proton, north pole—significantly unlike fictions—griffin, devil? Are words for sets of facts—*Greece, Rome*—different from words for value judgments—*glory, grandeur?* Do paradox, irony, and satire distort? Awareness of these distinctions is likely to produce an improvement not so much in the size of a writer's vocabulary as in the quality of his discernment. The old opinion, though, will not suffice. According to Lester Thonssen and Craig Baird, "Rhetoricians agree that figurative forms should not be used as substitutes for reason. . . . The figures must help to reinforce thought, but should not be regarded as the real thought *per se*."[18] It is one thing to discredit proof by analogy and another to set up as Thonssen and Baird do, a distinction between figurative thought and reified thought.

As for the symbol-to-symbol relations in reflective discourse, rhetoric is inclined to accept terms at face value and to use propositions deductively, and thus to be satisfied with formal coherence alone. For the purpose of argumentation, it is likely to convert differences into complete antitheses. A proposition is either true or false. It is debated in a kind of adversary proceeding: those who love phonics or flash cards must marry one or the other. Semantics takes a different approach. While acknowledging that categories are neccessary, it dislikes using them categorically. Its lexicon contains the word *yes-and-no*. It appeals from forensic art to nature.

The last relationship, that of symbol-to-person, is particularly subjective. It has individual and social consequences. The language a person (writer or reader) uses and the person's outlook interact. Rhetoricians and semanticists alike have insisted on the responsible use of language. Donald L. Clark, on the one side, had no doubt about "The Place of Rhetoric in a Liberal Education." "Let us," he said, ". . . envisage rhetoric as the training of young people to take their place in a human society where all transactions are conducted through the medium of language."[19] Albert Upton, on the other, has said in *Design for Thinking*, "We shall not be content with the mere description of language behavior . . . We seek rather to make our language behave."[20] If our comparison thus far has been accurate, of the two disciplines, semantics does more to discipline a writer's mind.

Rhetoric does discipline him in that it asks him to think constantly of the reader, not only of his subject and himself. The disposition must be orderly, in accordance with the nature of the subject and the psychology of the reader. Notions, recruited fitfully, need to be coordinated and made to march, their line of development interesting, clear, and effective.

We are back to that equivocal word—*effective*. If the writer's major purpose is expository, he can hardly be effective unless his discourse is, among other things, factually and ideologically sound. But what are the criteria for effective persuasion? Under certain circumstances, these expository tests may be irrelevant or insufficient. May the writer then distort? May he appeal to emotion? What are his obligations?

So long as it is earthly discourse, writing will show some bias. Disinterested as he may be, the writer will have an interest in producing and communicating the message. His comprehension will be incomplete. There is no objective scale by which he can measure the propriety of his connotations. And, as we have observed, his very choices will imply their rightness. But more than that—he may have and probably will have, a keen desire to persuade. If it is keen enough, will his language be what Ambrose Bierce said language always is: "the music with which we charm the serpents guarding another's treasure"?

For rhetorician or semanticist to advocate utter selflessness would be pharisaical, but what sort of literary conscience does each admire? Traditional rhetoric, Walter J. Ong has concluded, "was a way to 'get ahead' in society, an avowed means of making friends and influencing people."[21] Francis Donnelly, in a college text on oral rhetoric, published in 1931, said bluntly: "In reality there is only one precept for persuasive speech: Use any and every lawful means available to the spoken word, which will successfully bring the audience before you to do what you desire."[22] Nowadays rhetoricians would probably favor the semantic amendment introduced into a 1965 text: "rhetoric is the study of honest, effective communication."[23] They would also probably warn any freebooters against overconfidence. Semantics, as we have seen, would have writer and reader more fully aware of the factual and logical criteria by which to judge persuasion.

What about deliberate appeals to emotion? So long as the test is effectiveness, they will be sanctioned, as they were by Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero: the distinction between good and bad propaganda is then practical instead of ethical; even extreme appeals are not forbidden if they work. Most rhetoricians and most semanticists, however, consider legitimate only those emotional appeals that are directed to the nobler emotions. This principle and its specific applications are, of course, derived from value judgments outside rhetoric and semantics—whether from religion, moral philosophy, biology, or the conditions for exchanging scientific information.

It seems to me that rhetoric stresses emotional commitment and semantics the reasons for it. When rhetoric warns against insincerity, it does not warn enough against self-binding by verbal spells. Nor does it warn sufficiently that appeals to benevolent emotions may be made on behalf of fake charities and race prejudice. As John Sherwood said, rhetoric and semantics are both interested in "the relationship between words and people," but "rhetoric is traditionally an art of persuasion, a set of devices to enable us to move the emotions of others with words, whereas semantics has been concerned partly with helping us to understand the emotional effects of words in order to resist those effects when others attempt to employ them on us—a purpose almost opposite to the aims of rhetoric."[24] What in rhetoric is the writer's purpose, becomes in semantics his intention. Semantics does not reject emotion; it identifies it, and asks for its credentials.

Albert R. Kitzhaber's valuable study, *Theme, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College,*[25] makes out a good case for the return to rhetoric. I am puzzled, however, by Kitzhaber's treatment of semantics. He seems to regret its omission from the courses required of prospective English teachers (p. 15), and yet he himself omits it from his "suggested minimum bibliography for composition teachers" (pp. 164-165). I suspect that for him semantics is mainly General Semantics and a full partner in courses in communications that have failed. He does not ask this important question about past changes in freshman programs: Why were they made?

Forty years ago many English departments, anxious to make the freshman rhetoric course less academic, abandoned some of its routines and its name. Fundamentally, however, composition or expository writing or freshman English stayed geared to fluency and effectiveness, until in the late thirties semantics began a reappraisal.

Then in the early forties, in compliance with governmental directives, we tried to teach the officer candidates oral as well as written English. By the end of the war, impressed with the importance of reading and listening, we fitted these so-called passive verbal activities into the course too, and renamed it communication. Like rhetoric, communication insisted that speaking and writing reach out to an audience. But communication tended to focus on current issues and on the common semantic environment—the mass media—often in the light of General Semantics. Thus it sharpened the students' interest in language and motivated them to write, but it did not provide enough theory of composition or enough practice. Next, in order to improve writing skill, we deemphasized speaking, listening, and the less literary readings. We substituted for semantics, as a language study, the new linguistic grammar. And, to be sure, we reinstated the course name that preceded communication. Unfortunately, the change has not proved a remedy. We are now turning back, still farther, it seems, to rhetoric.

I am convinced that freshmen need guided practice in writing. They also need, if they are to write well, something worth saying and the desire to say it as expertly as possible. Liveliness of spirit, clear thinking, a feeling for the language—these, likewise, count. Since no course can bring all this into being, we ought neither to hold ourselves too guilty for past failures nor hope for great triumphs. But as we go on with the infinite task of reconstruction, we should not forget previous experiences.

In my opinion, there is no best formula for mixing rhetoric and semantics in a freshman course in composition. Some of each, I think, is indispensable. Rhetoric, because it is on the writer's side and because it concerns producing the whole composition—the larger units especially, is indeed pertinent. Rhetoric demands careful craftsmanship. But too eager for effect, it is itself sometimes careless of logic and the correspondence between words and things. The result then is hollow elegance. The corrective, I think, is semantics. Although it is directed to the reader, it can challenge him, when he writes, to think carefully about all problems of meaning. It is particularly relevant to judgments about category formation, about the force of context, about the adequacy of definition, and about word choice in general. It separates discourse that combines facts with opinions and evaluation from discourse that makes a mere pretense of reason. Although rhetoric shows the writer the relationship of verbal means to ends, semantics reminds him of his responsibilities to himself and his audience.

NOTES

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9. Wayne Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 99.

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14. Weaver, *Ethics, op. cit.*, p. 127.

15. William E. Coles, Jr., "The Way Johnny Can't Read," *AAUP Bulletin*, XXXXIX (September 1963), 241.

16. Sister Miriam Joseph, *Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962).

17. Marie H. Nichols, *Rhetoric and Criticism* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1963).

18. Lester Thonssen and Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1948), p. 423 f.

19. Donald L. Clark, "The Place of Rhetoric in a Liberal Education," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XXXVI (October 1950), 294.

20. Albert Upton, *Design for Thinking* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 13.

21. Walter J. Ong, *The Barbarian Within* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 184.

22. Francis Donnelly, *Persuasive Speech: An Art of Rhetoric* (New York, 1931), p. vi, O.P.

23. W. Ross Winterowd, *Rhetoric and Writing* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1965), p. 8.

24. John C. Sherwood, *Discourse of Reason: A Brief Handbook of Semantics and Logic* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1960), p. 4.

25. Albert R. Kitzhaber, *Theme, Theories and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963).

A New Look at Old Rhetoric

Edward P. J. Corbett

With the resurgence of interest in rhetoric, teachers of English have been looking in two directions for a rationale that they might adopt and adapt for the classroom. Some of them have been looking toward the old rhetoric; others have been looking toward the new. When we speak of the *old rhetoric,* we have in mind the system, concerned primarily with persuasive discourse, that was first formulated in fifth century Athens, that flourished in Augustan Rome, that constituted a member of the trivium in medieval schools, that became a dominant force in English education during the Renaissance and remained a prominent part of the curriculum until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. When we speak of the *new rhetoric,* we are referring not to any unified, codified system that has developed in recent years but rather to the roots of a new system that we find in the work of the General Semanticists, of the cultural anthropologists, of the behavioral scientists, of those interested in stylistics, and of men like I. A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Marshall McLuhan, and Kenneth Pike.

At the moment, the new rhetoric seems to be more intriguing to more teachers than the old rhetoric, partly because it is new and partly because it strikes them as being more relevant to the mood and needs of our age. But the old rhetoric has attracted its own band of disciples, relatively small perhaps but nonetheless fervent. This bifurcation of interest does not mean that the two bands of adherents are going off in opposite directions. What is happening rather is that the two bands are traveling parallel paths to a common objective. Whether we choose to take the high road or the low road, the hope is that we will all arrive eventually at the same inn where we may take our ease—a bit weary from the ardors of the journey but pleased with the flowers we have gathered along the way. For what all of us are seeking is a relevant, realistic, meaningful, effective rhetoric or, even better, a variety of rhetorics, which if they can not teach our students to write better can at least teach them something needful to know about the art of prose discourse.

Since there is ample evidence of a stir, if not a movement, in the direction of the old or classical rhetoric, it would be well to take a look at this ancient—maybe antiquated—system, to see whether there is anything still valid and valuable in it for the modern classroom. And maybe it is best that such an assessment come from those of us who have been burning incense at the ancient shrine.

One of the reasons why some teachers have been turning to classical rhetoric is that they find there a unified, coherent, completed system. The new rhetoric at the moment exists in bits and pieces, and what is needed now is some *sartor* who can take the shreds and patches and stitch them into a whole coat. I hope that the tailor who undertakes this task will be a man of the stature of Quintilian, the man who gave the fullest and clearest exposition of the classical system. In the meanwhile, there is a whole coat hanging in the closet, a bit moth-eaten, somewhat ridiculous in its outmoded cut, bedizened with baubles and trinkets. Still and all, it is a good substantial coat, which Peter, Jack, and Martin, with some judicious cutting and plucking, might be able to render fashionable again.

With the attention they gave to invention, arrangement, and style, the classical rhetoricians touched on *all* the processes involved in composing a discourse. One of the reasons why there has been no major breakthrough in the formulation of a new rhetoric is that we still have not plumbed the psychology of the composition process. A promise of such a plumbing seems to lie in the work of men like B.F. Skinner and Jerome Bruner. But the breakthrough, if it comes, can only be extensions, modifications, refinements of what men like Aristotle and Cicero had to say about how we discover something to say, how we make decisions about the selection and arrangement of what has been invented, and how we make choices from among the available lexical and syntactical means of expressing what has been discovered, selected, and arranged. As one reads the classical rhetoricians, one is continually amazed at the soundness and perceptiveness of their observations—primitive and inchoate though they may be—of what happened or should happen when a man sat down to compose a piece of connected discourse.

Those of us who have been teaching composition for some years know that the crucial difficulty for most students is the finding of enough to say or the right things to say about a given subject. The major portion of most of the comprehensive rhetorics was devoted to invention, and the major contribution that the classical rhetoricians made in this area was the system of the topics. When Dudley Bailey makes a plea for a modern set of *topoi,*[1] what he is calling for is a system of discovery that will be as sensible, as helpful, as productive as the common and special topics devised by the classical rhetoricians.

The topics might well be regarded as a form of epistemology, the science of how the human mind comes to know. When we approach a subject, we may feel the urge to seek out its nature, and we may discover that nature by assigning the subject to a class or genus or by breaking it down into its constituent parts. Or we may see the possibility of comparing the subject with something else, and when we do that, we may discover similarities or discover differences either in kind or in degree. Or we may sense a relationship between the subject and something else, and we may discover that one thing is related to another as an effect to a cause or as a consequent to an antecedent.

Or we may be curious about what others have said about the subject, and then we become involved in various kinds of testimony, for which we must go outside the subject.

There is nothing arcane about the topics; they accurately categorize the mental processes involved in any kind of inquiry. It was for this reason that Peter Ramus proposed to transfer the art of invention from the province of rhetoric to the province of logic. The value of the topics in the composition process is that they provide the student with a method of probing a subject, a method, as Edmund Burke put it, of "calling up what we do know, and investigating that of which we are ignorant."[2] I like to think of the topics as pump primers.

I do have some reservations about the usefulness of the topics. When I read my own prose or the prose of others, I can see that the topics have been operative in the development of the various sections of the composition. But when I switch from analysis to synthesis, when, in other words, I sit down to compose a discourse, I have the same doubts about the value of the topics that I have about the various methods of developing the topic sentence of a paragraph: I am not conscious of composing in any such systematic way. Like a good many other writers that I have talked with, I often do not know what I want to say until I have said it.

The unreality of the topics for me, however, is not a weakness inherent in the system. Since I was never trained in any system of invention, I had to work out my own methods. Now when I try to make use of the topics, I find the system mechanical and inhibiting. As the old saying goes, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. But I have found that the topics do work for students who have not yet fixed their habits of composition, and Richard Weaver and his colleagues testified a few years ago about the effectiveness of the topics in a composition class at the University of Chicago.[3] A system that succeeded in making Tudor schoolboys remarkably articulate and expansive might help to banish the two-sentence paragraph from our own students' themes.

More than any other rhetorical system I know of, classical rhetoric was conscious of the interrelationships between the speaker, the speech, and the audience. Classical rhetoric had its beginning as a practical course designed to train the citizen in the most effective way of composing a discourse that would be delivered *viva voce* before a live audience. The speaker had to be aware of his audience, had to know it, had to know its attitudes, its emotional disposition, its aspirations and prejudices. It was the audience mainly that determined what a speaker would choose to say and how and in what order he would say it. The discourse of the Athenian forum was conceived of as a communication art more intensely perhaps than at any time since. The speaker on radio or television is aware too of an audience out there, but he can not see it, can not hear it breathing and murmuring and coughing and shuffling. In the final scene of the play *Inherit the Wind,* the end of the era of the Chautauqua circuit, the era when the

William Jennings Bryans addressed yawping audiences in cow pastures, was symbolized when a microphone was installed in the courtroom to relay the final pronouncement.

As Marshall McLuhan has been pointing out, the invention of printing also served to detach the speaker from his audience. The Gutenberg revolution, he says, has detribalized man. If, as McLuhan claims, electronic media are replacing typographical media as the principal means of informing, persuading, and entertaining the citizenry, we shall certainly have to develop a new rhetoric to serve this age. But I propose that a rhetoric for the "hot" and "cool" electronic media has some valuable lessons to learn from Aristotelian rhetoric. And the most valuable lesson it can learn is Aristotle's insistence that the audience is the chief informing principle in any kind of communicative discourse.

It was in Book II of the *Rhetoric,* the section in which the emotions are anatomized, that Aristotle paid special attention to the audience. He was the first rhetorician to provide such an analysis of the emotions, and curiously enough, he was the only rhetorician to do so until the growth of interest in psychology prompted the eighteenth century Scottish rhetoricians to concern themselves with the mechanism of the pathetic appeal. It was Aristotle too who first recognized the legitimacy and efficacy of the appeal to the emotions. Supreme realist that he was, Aristotle took man as he found him, not as he should be. Viewing rhetoric as the art of discovering all the available means of persuasion, he saw that appeals to human emotions were available means of persuasion. And while he expressed the wish that man would consistently order his life by the light of reason, he recognized that man was often moved to action by the impetus of his emotions. Accordingly, it behooved the aspiring orator to know what the common emotions were, how to trigger them off when they served his purpose, and how to allay them when they were working against him.

A good many teachers, I am sure, regard the suggestion that they should train their students to be skillful manipulators of emotions as nothing short of criminal. Has not society suffered enough, they say, from the effects of hate and fear and anger? Should we be swelling the ranks of the demagogues, the politicians, the ad men, of those who exploit the emotions, either blatantly or subliminally, for their nefarious purposes? Yes, herein lies a danger. Give anyone a skill, a power, and he is liable to abuse it. But what does it say about our teaching, about the moral fabric of our nation, if we hesitate to train our students in the psychology of the human emotions out of fear that they will abuse the power they have gained?

Aristotle saw the protection against such an abuse of power as residing in the ethical appeal. The man who shamelessly exploited the emotions of his fellowmen for evil purposes would not retain for long the audience's confidence in his intelligence (*phronēsis*), moral character (*aretē*), and good will (*eunoia*). The man who loses this confidence, eventually loses all, for even the cleverest of appeals to reason or emotion will fall on deaf ears if the audience loses respect for the ethos of the speaker or writer. The successful communicator or persuader is summed up after all in Cato's definition of the ideal orator: a good man skilled in speaking (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*).

In our concern for the audience, however, it is not enough to know simply the emotional disposition of our hearers or readers. We must come also to an awareness of their aspirations, biases, obsessions, attitudes, and *idées recus*. If we can get our students to look outward again, to observe human nature as it exists outside of themselves, we may reverse the tendency toward introspection and solipsism that set in during the Romantic period, that was strengthened by the interest in Freudian psychology, and that has culminated in existentialism. During the last hundred and fifty years we have shown a remarkable disposition to follow Plato's advice, "know thyself." What we need now is a counter-balancing disposition to "know thy brother." What we can learn about our brothers from the classical rhetoricians can be profitably augmented from the studies of cultural anthropologists, linguists, and behavioral scientists. It is here that the new rhetoric can extend and improve our heritage from the ancient rhetoricians.

One of the limitations of that heritage from the classical rhetoricians may be, as has been charged, its concentration on argumentative discourse. The definitions of rhetoric, the contents of rhetoric texts, and the history of rhetoric, at least until the second half of the eighteenth century, reveal an almost exclusive concern with polemical discourse. This preoccupation with argumentation may diminish, for some teachers, the usefulness of classical rhetoric as a rationale for a modern course in composition. George Campbell's definition of rhetoric as the art of discourse designed "to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, or to influence the will" represents for many people the first attempt to extend the province of rhetoric. Most of the definitions of rhetoric that have been formulated since Campbell's time have manifested this same inclination to stretch the domain of rhetoric to cover expository and descriptive, as well as argumentative, discourse. So in recent years we have been getting definitions phrased in broad, general terms like these: "the art of effective prose"; "the art of energizing truth"; "the art of adjusting people to ideas, and ideas to people"; or Kenneth Burke's definition, "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."

This desire to extend the province of rhetoric is implicit, however, in Cicero's notion of the tripartite function of rhetoric: to teach (*docere*), to please (*delectare*), and to incite (*movere*). And the more one studies the strategies of invention, arrangement, and style as they are set forth in the classical rhetorics, the more one sees classical rhetoric as a means-end art that is applicable to all forms of prose—whether we choose to classify these forms as exposition, argumentation, description, and narration or as the informative, the expressive, and the directive uses of language.

There are many signs that we are on the threshold of a significant breakthrough in stylistics. Readers of NCTE and CCCC publications are now well aware of the exciting work that men like Francis Christensen and Richard Ohmann are doing with the rhetoric of the sentence and the paragraph. I know personally of at least four textbooks on style and descriptive studies of prose style that are scheduled for publication within the next year. If the caliber and training of our students continue to improve as they have in the last five years or so, we may well be able to devote a good part of the college freshman course to a profound and discriminating study of style. If that should happen, we may be able to make the American schoolboy as conscious of style as the French schoolboy has traditionally been.

And if the study of style returns to the classrooms, such a study will profit immensely from what we have learned about the genius of our language from the structural and transformational grammarians. But I suggest that we can also learn some valuable lessons about style from the classical rhetoricians. True, some of their observations about style, particularly about the rhythms of sentences, are not applicable to a noninflected language like English. But many of their precepts about choice of diction and collocation of words are as useful today as they were two thousand years ago. We might make our students more aware of the lexical and syntactical resources of their language if we were also to investigate with them the many schemes and tropes that the classical rhetoricians discovered in their prose writers. It would be a mistake, I think, to burden our students with the 200 or more figures of speech that Tudor schoolboys were required to recognize and use, but we would be doing them a great service if we were to extend their awareness of figures of speech beyond the list of a dozen or so that have been the staple of twentieth century rhetoric books. I refuse to believe that our students would suffer a permanent trauma if we were to expose them to such common schemes and tropes as anaphora, antimetabole, polyptoton, antanaclasis, paronomasia, anthimeria.

That litany of strange, polysyllabic terms brings to mind an objection that is commonly raised against the old rhetoric: one must master a whole new vocabulary before one can put the system to work in the classroom. Coming from teachers, this objection is the least impressive and the most shocking of the reasons offered for not appropriating some of the lessons of the old rhetoric. Above all others, teachers of English should know that one can not advance one's knowledge in any direction without mastering a new vocabulary. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* had to record 100,000 new words or new meanings because of the tremendous explosion in knowledge that has taken place in a single generation. We must give a local habitation and a name to new concepts if we are to know them, to talk about them, and to use them. But let terminology be what it should be—a means to an end, not an end in itself. And if the strange, sesquipedalian terminology proves to be an insuperable stumbling block, invent new terminology or make use of more familiar terms. The term *tone,* for instance, that we heard so much about from the New Critics, carries a good deal of the meaning that the classical rhetoricians comprehended under the term *ethical appeal.* And if *understatement* is a less frightening term for the trope that the classical rhetoricians called *litotes,* by all means use the more familiar term. But if new terms are not ready to hand, I see no reason why teachers of English, who in recent years have mastered such terms as *supra-segmental phonemes, transformations,* and *tagmemics,* should be thrown by such terms as *epideictic, enargeia,* and *anastrophe.* What's in a name, after all, that should so frustrate us?

I hope I have not created the impression that I am making a plea for the restoration of classical rhetoric as *the* rhetoric for the modern age. Just as Ronald S. Crane a few years ago was making a plea for a pluralism of critical approaches, so I am making a plea for a pluralism of rhetorical approaches. I see exciting possibilities in the new rhetorics and the new stylistics that are beginning to form all about us. But I see much of proven value in the old rhetoric too. We need more men of the stature of Porter Perrin and Fred Newton Scott to turn their talents to the preparation of modern rhetoric texts. But remember that the old rhetoric engaged the talents of men like Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero, Longinus, Erasmus, and Thomas Wilson. Maybe what I am calling for here is best summed up in that memorable couplet of Alexander Pope:

> Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

NOTES

1. Dudley Bailey, "A Plea for a Modern Set of *Topoi,*" *College English,* XXVI (November 1964), 111-117.

2. From an original manuscript among the Wentworth-Fitzwilliam papers in the Sheffield City Library, quoted in Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Function and Its Scope," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* XXXIX (December 1953), 401-424.

3. Richard M. Weaver, Manuel Bilsky, McCrea Hazlett, and Robert E. Streeter, "Looking for an Argument," *College English,* XIV (January 1953), 210-216.

Traditional Misconceptions of Traditional Rhetoric

P. Albert Duhamel

Now that rhetoric seems to have regained favor as a noun, *rhetoric,* signifying a respectable subject of study, the art of effective expression, after years of tenuous existence as an adjective, the pejorative adjective *rhetorical,* suggestive of bombast and insincerity, it seems worthwhile to try to make sure that we have a clear understanding of the subject, and that we are not, once again, temporarily dallying with a faddish misconception.

All the subjects of the curriculum are subject to misunderstanding but none more so than the arts of the trivium: grammar, rhetoric, logic. These three are forever being restricted or expanded in scope, rising and falling in popular favor. Grammar has risen from the preoccupation of a drudge to the concern of the mathematical programmer. Logic has been the profession for hair splitters and the basis of mathematics. Of the three arts of the trivium rhetoric, because of its peculiar nature, has been the subject of the greatest misconception.

At the outset it may be worthwhile to mention that this is not to be a plea for classical rhetoric but an essay towards the definition of what a contemporary rhetoric might be if we are to use traditional rhetoric as a point of departure and to avoid some of the past distortions which have excessively limited or extended the nature of the art. Also I do not propose to trace—which I would be unable to do anyway—the history of traditional rhetoric from the pre-Socratics to Ed Corbett, but rather I will attempt to indicate some dangers of recurring misconceptions of traditional rhetoric resulting from a misunderstanding of the nature of the art.

By traditional rhetoric, I mean that conception of rhetoric common to Aristotle and Cicero which is capable, perhaps, to avoid difficulties, of only a descriptive definition. Traditional rhetorics consist of a treatment of invention, discovery of arguments, disposition, the organization of material, and style, the effective presentation of material. Traditional rhetorics are those of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553) when taken in conjunction with his *Rule of Reason* (1551), Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) and Richard Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* (1828.)

It was Richard P. McKeon who pointed out in an article which still remains central and essential to an understanding of the history of rhetoric, "Rhetoric in the Middle Ages" (*Speculum*, XVII [1942]) that "rhetoricians from Cicero to Ramus have in common a persistent care in defining their art and it seems plausible that a history of rhetoric traced in terms of its matter and function, as successively specified, might follow the sense of altering definitions, the differentiation of various conceptions of rhetoric itself, and the spread of the devices of rhetoric to subject matters far from those ordinarily ascribed to it." (p.3)

With this principle of the importance of the altering definition in mind, let us consider Aristotle's definition of the art of rhetoric as he first states it towards the end of the first chapter of the first book. He repeats it in a slightly abbreviated form at the opening of the second chapter indicating by a *thus* in one place and a *then* in the other that he considers this definition to be the result of an inductive progression in much the same fashion that the definition of tragedy at the opening of Chapter 6 of the *Poetics* is to be recognized as the result of an inductive survey of available evidence.

"It is *thus* evident"—using the translation of J. H. Freese in the Loeb Library edition—"that rhetoric does not deal with any one definite class of subjects, but, like dialectic, is of general application; also, that it is useful; and further, that its function is not so much to persuade, as to find out in each case the existing means of persuasion." (1355 b)

It seems to me that there are three important assertions in this definition:

1. That rhetoric, like dialectic, is an art without any special subject but which can be applied to all subjects. It is this idea which Professor McKeon was stressing in the *Speculum* article already referred to when he was criticizing histories of rhetoric and conceptions of rhetoric which failed to take it into account. "Rhetoric," he wrote, "is applied to many incommensurate subject matters; it borrows devices from other arts and its technical terms and methods become, without trace of their origin, parts of other arts and sciences; its own devices may be bent back upon themselves in such a way that any part of rhetoric or any matter incidentally involved in it—words and style, character and passion, reason and imagination, the kinds of orations, civil philosophy, practical action—may become basic to the definition of all technical terms and distinctions." (p. 3) Failure to bear this principle of traditional rhetoric in mind has, as I will try to show later, resulted in the restriction of histories or texts of the art to a consideration of a part of the art, style, or oratory, or forensic speeches. Failure to recognize the nature of an art as having no subject matter but as applicable to all subjects has led to unjustified criticism of those texts or courses which have attempted to find their illustrations or laboratory material from as wide a range of models of effective expression as possible.

2. The second assertion of the definition is that rhetoric is a useful and not merely a theoretical study. This idea was implicit in Aristotle's

classification of rhetoric as an art, not a science, for an art, for Aristotle, is a skill in doing. Cicero, in the first book, second chapter of the *De Oratore* indicates that he has some disagreements with his brother on the nature of rhetoric, but both agree that it depends "on the trained skill" and "on practice." It was the transfer from theory to practice which plagued the classical theorists and teachers, and, as we shall see in a moment, continues to lead to misconceptions from those who expect from rhetoric only theory or a universal achievement which it never promised.

3. The third assertion in the Aristotelian definition of rhetoric is that its end, function, work, or purpose is not to persuade but to find out in each case the existing means of persuasion. It is this last point which is stressed in the abbreviated form of the definition at the opening of Chapter 2 of Book I—"Rhetoric *then* may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever"—and let us consider the implications of this point first.

Traditional rhetoric never promised to make any man eloquent or persuasive. The Sophists and medieval ornamentationalists may have—not those who defined their art as teaching the available means. In any number of discussions of the relevance of traditional or classical rhetoric to the teaching of composition or style, it is possible to detect the assumption that the proponents of an English course organized around rhetoric are promising to achieve the unachievable. Medical schools do not propose to turn out physicians who are sure to cure; they try to graduate students who are aware of the means of producing a cure. A course in rhetoric, or the study of rhetoric, is a study of means to ends, not a study of rules guaranteed to work.

Cicero in Chapter 5 of Book I of the *De Oratore* says:

> let us therefore cease to wonder what may be the cause of the rarity of orators, since oratory is the result of a whole number of things, in any one of which to succeed is a great achievement, and let us rather exhort our children and the others whose fame and repute are dear to us, to form a true understanding of the greatness of their task, and not to believe that they can gain their coveted object by reliance on the rules or teachers or methods of practice employed by everybody, but to rest assured that they can do this by the help of certain other means.

In the opening sections of *The Rhetoric* Aristotle is constantly differentiating between those who conceive of rhetoric—in theory and practice—as concerned with the particular. He distinguishes between artificial and inartificial proofs. The latter are those which are at hand in the facts of a case, the witnesses who will testify, the physical evidence, the testimony. Artificial proofs are those which are invented, drawn from the nature of the case, the circumstances, the opposites—in short those based on the 28 topics he defines in the second book. It is these artificial or systematic logical proofs "which make a man a master of rhetorical argument."

But these proofs can not be discussed as particular proofs but only as structures in terms of general organization. Anyone who would attempt to discuss them in terms of the form they can take would be falsifying the nature of the art. As he says, "It is obvious that all those who definitely lay down, for instance, what should be the contents of the exordium, or the narrative, or of the other parts of the discourse, are bringing under the rules of art what is outside the subject." (1354 b) Art of rhetoric is concerned with the structures and forms arguments—ethical, pathetic, and rational—may take, not the content of these arguments.

Students are interested in content, not the formal validity but the material validity. The teacher of rhetoric must be constantly fighting the class and the temptation to yield to the class to discuss the content. The content is there to illustrate the principle; the principle is the concern of the art.

Obviously this involves a dichotomy for the eloquence of the effectiveness is the result of matter as well as form. One is eloquent not because of a brilliant outline but because of what was said. Classical rhetoric seems to have been aware of this dichotomy but to have accepted it as a consequence of its overall theory.

In a sound article in *College Composition and Communication* for May 1965, Louis T. Milic's "Theories of Style and Their Implications for the Teaching of Composition," points out that "the best theory of style for teaching composition" may not necessarily be "the best theory for analyzing literary works. For teaching, a dualistic theory seems to be essential, at least in the early stages, until the maturing of the literary personality has had an opportunity to influence the student's style. For analysis, the problem is somewhat different." (p. 126)

Classical rhetoric seems to have accepted these limitations. It was an introduction to the art which began with an explanation and definition of the means. The art was not achieved with a knowledge of the definition of the structures that might be effective—that was a theoretical knowledge. Art came with the ability to use these structures, because art is a skill and rhetoric is a useful skill. Which leads us to a consideration of the second assertion in the Aristotelian definition: "Rhetoric is useful." This idea was implicit in the classification of rhetoric as an art for arts; in the Aristotelian scheme of the organization of knowledge are skills, which are ways of doing, such as argument, and the sciences, which are ways of knowing. The arts or skills are habits which can never be perfect. There is always the possibility of learning more. The sciences are collections of knowledge arrived at by deduction or demonstration which gives certitude.

The road to the perfection of the skill begins with some analysis of the theory. The way to teach students how to write more effectively is to begin by analyzing models of effectiveness with them, to make them aware of alternative means of organization, different kinds of arguments, multiple strategies of word choice. The more thoroughly students are made aware of the possibilities of alternative means, the richer will be their grasp of the idea of the complexity of the art, the finer their appreciation, and the more likely they will be to discipline themselves to its acquisition.

Consequently it is a misconception of rhetoric to try to divest it entirely of its critical preoccupations. Classical rhetoric is basically an autotelic system of criticism. Parts of rhetoric have also been exaggerated into self-contained critical systems, but this is as wrong a misconception as a denial of all concern. Medieval rhetorics from Isidore of Seville, Martianus Capella on down limited rhetoric to a critical system. Rhetoric for them was the definition and application of the schemes and tropes. Reflected medieval concern sprung from Augustine that the part of rhetoric concerned with proofs had been rendered useless by revelation. If rhetoric is the art of the probable, it will be fostered as long as the limitation of the human to the probable in many cases is recognized. But if all necessary truth is available through revelation, then why should students be required to learn an inferior system.

This identification of rhetoric with a third of its traditional extent, limiting rhetoric to style, was persistent through the Renaissance. Susenbrotus, Mosellanus, Sherry, Puttenham—all limited rhetoric to style, conceived of rhetoric as teaching of definition. This continued through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with few exceptions. John Sterling's *A System of Rhetoric* (1773) is almost entirely limited to definitions of some 99 figures. John Ward's *A System of Oratory* (1720) seems at first glance to be an extensive rhetoric but it is in actuality but a treatment of style.

This identification of rhetoric with but one of its parts, style, and that taught mainly theoretically, continues today among some of its devotees as well as its critics. Teachers are to be found using recent books such as Sr. Miriam Joseph's *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language* in the same way in which Renaissance schoolmasters used Sherry's 1550 *Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* as a dictionary of definitions to be memorized and applied. We can see the effect of that kind of training in sixteenth century editions of Cicero where the reader labeled in the margins the assonance, the isocolon, the paramoron and what not. Examinations then, as today, in courses that teach but a part of the theory of the art of rhetoric, must have consisted of requiring the student to recall definitions of figures or to recognize them by labeling them properly in selected texts.

Ramistic rhetoric, whether those of Talon or A. Fraunce, were also limited to a part of rhetoric and ornamentational in their thinking about style. Ramus never solved but seemed to be aware of the dichotomy in classical rhetoric which assumes one can think of form without content. Ramus was very Platonic in thinking that all the student needed to learn a definition of a figure was to be presented with a definition and an illustration, that the mind would then grasp the truth and the essentials of the definition. Ramus' pedagogy was superior to his critical theory for he insisted that there must be exercises, that genesis, use should accompany, analysis, theory. He ridiculed those Aristotelians so limited to theory that their sermons, instead of being about moral problems, were about theories of the predicables. The force of his thesis, "all that Aristotle says is contrived," was intended to be directed against any teaching which was not natural and practical. So that though the Ramus texts may have perpetuated the ornamentationalism of medieval thinking, they were a step in the right direction towards a return to a more adequate and correct conception of the nature and scope of traditional rhetoric.

It is easier to teach the theory of rhetoric than it is the practice, but rhetorical principles without rhetorical usage is a distortion of the art. The best text in a course in rhetoric is not a request for a series of definitions but a request for a demonstration of the ability to write effectively. The developed ability presupposes the theory; the theory by itself is a construct, a fabrication, a halfway point.

Let us now return to the first assertion of Aristotle's definition of rhetoric. "Rhetoric does not deal with any one definite class of subjects but is of general application." Traditional rhetoric is always being restricted to a function, to a subject matter, or to an application. The eighteenth century, like the days of the Roman Empire, tended to limit rhetoric to elocution or delivery. Thomas Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution* of 1762 and John Walker's *Elements of Elocution,* 1781, misconceive of rhetoric as limited in its application to delivery. Others would limit rhetoric to a training for the law courts.

At the opening of Chapter 20, Book I of the rhetoric Aristotle reiterates that "as an art [rhetoric's] rules are not applied to any particular definite class of things." Rhetoric "appears to be able to discover the means of persuasion in reference to any given subject." Cicero also in Chapter 6 of Book I of the *De Oratore* shows that "the significance of the term 'orator' and the mere art of professing eloquence, seem to undertake and to promise that every subject whatsoever, proposed to an orator, will be treated by him with both distinction and knowledge."

So any attempt to limit the applicability of rhetoric to some subject matter or circumstance, or its teaching in such a way that it thereby becomes limited, is a distortion of its nature. Students should be taught to recognize effective strategies of expression in all kinds of subject matters and should be required to try to express themselves effectively on a great number of subjects. Illustrations of effectiveness should be sought far and wide to avoid giving the impression that rhetoric is only concerned with one area.

The teaching of rhetoric is the teaching of form and structure, not the teaching of content; that is the function of the subject matter, sciences, the arts of the quadrivium and their descendants. Teachers must always be driving the students to a recognition and application of effective strategies. This must be done through the use of particulars as illustrations, but the particular content—always of primary interest to the student—should be kept secondary to the main goal which is an understanding of the general and typical.

If there is any emphasis in traditional rhetoric, it is the very opposite of the Renaissance and eighteenth century ornamentationalism. For Aristotle the main part of the art was the understanding of the proofs, what came to be known as invention. "Everything else is merely an accessory." (1354 a.) Most important means of persuasion are the artificial proofs to be derived from a knowledge of the topics. All other kinds of proof are peripheral.

Still he recognizes other kinds of proof—the emotional and ethical—and does not refuse, as some contemporary Platonizing critics, to recognize that man can be swayed by other than purely rational considerations. The first seventeen chapters of Book II of the rhetoric are devoted to a consideration of the means a speaker can use to appeal to the emotions of his hearers: what he should bear in mind about the prejudices of his audiences and how he should take them into account. Traditional rhetoricians would have welcomed the discoveries of the Motivation Researchers and the engineers of consent for they were the pioneers. Aristotle and Cicero and others—George Campbell in *Philosophy of Rhetoric* of 1771, Bacon in his *obiter dicta* on rhetoric also in the eighteenth century—conceived of rhetoric as teaching means of moving the will by appeal to the imagination. They saw man as a composite and the art of the rhetorician as complex—an infinite number of strategies for an infinite number of situations.

Recognizing the complexity of the art, the nature of its object, that it was a skill which man can never possess perfectly, the traditional rhetoricians would have been nearsighted indeed if they believed that their rhetorics contained all there was to know about the theory of their art. Aristotle never claimed that there were only 28 topics. Cicero never claimed his 10 topic analogies were the whole story. The Aristotelian rhetoric is one system of rhetoric; the Ciceronian another. Each is incomplete as the *Poetics* was incomplete because the analysis was limited. Yet many critics claim proponents of traditional rhetoric oppose it to new rhetoric. It's an opposition I fail to understand. I think we should teach one system; any system in preference to no system. No system can be no rhetoric or bits and pieces of all or so many that they conflict with one another. I also think the system of traditional rhetoric should be supplemented whenever possible by the addition of insights from psychology, anthropology, any of the sciences because that is what rhetoric is, an art which without being limited to any subject matter can be applied to all subject matter to help man become more skillful in the recognition of the available means of persuasion. This certainly should give him greater insight into himself, into his society, and encourage him to a recognition of their potentialities. There can be no greater purpose.

Some Preliminaries to English-Speech Collaboration in the Study of Rhetoric

Carroll C. Arnold

Literary and pragmatic rhetoricians have never tried very hard in modern times to define just where their professional concerns overlap. Certainly this has been true in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Perhaps a reason is that it is so easy to say simply, "We're all interested in rhetoric." But this kind of statement has almost no meaning, for rhetoric does not specify very clearly what one is talking about. For example, *rhetoric* will not serve as a universal, unrestricted term in any syllogism leading to a conclusion concerning what students of writing and speaking ought to teach and learn. "We share an interest in rhetoric," says little semantically or logically, and it says little practically. Aristotle observed more than twenty-four centuries ago that speeches written by professional writers sounded "thin" in the actual "tussle" while speeches by professional speakers "look amateurish enough when they pass into the hands of a reader."[1] They still sound and look that way. The unedited speeches of even the most expert speakers and the platform soliloquies of savants furnish ample evidence. Then what rhetoric is it that is interesting to both the student of writing and the student of orality?

To an extent which we ought to try to define more clearly, certain rhetorical considerations actually separate students of writing from students of the spoken word. I suggest, therefore, that an important preliminary to collaborative study of rhetoric by members of the English profession and of the speech profession is to join in colloquy with a view to discovering just what are the differences and similarities between otherwise comparable oral and written messages. Their similarities would presumably specify a part of the rhetoric the two professions should jointly explore and teach.

In the rest of this paper I shall try to take some tentative, first steps toward inaugurating such a colloquy. To begin, I suggest a proposition from which speech-English collaboration in teaching and research might advance. That proposition is: *students of writing, literature, and orality will be concerned with identical rhetorical concepts and criteria whenever they are explaining the nature of didactic verbal behavior.* This proposition does not allege that either the student of writing or the student of human speech is concerned *only* with those tools that help to explain how didactic discourse works. Neither does it assert that all those who explore verbal communication are concerned with these shared rhetorical concepts in identical degree. I am supposing only that all students of literature and other kinds of writing and all students of human speech try sometimes to explain and evaluate verbal behavior that works propositionally, didactically, pragmatically, tuitionally—choose what word you will. In those moments, I believe, all will need identical bodies of knowledge and, probably, similar methods of criticism and pedagogy.

Let me now try to amplify and pursue the implications of this point of view.

Not much evidence need be adduced to demonstrate that every student of writing, literature, or orality will at some time need to ferret out how didactic discourse gets made, gets perceived, and gets translated into response within the skin of a reader or hearer. Essays and speeches constantly involve us in such explanations. Professor Wayne C. Booth has shown how extensively the literary scholar's concerns may be rhetorical:

> The common ingredient that I find in all writing I admire—excluding for now novels, plays and poems—is something that I shall reluctantly call the rhetorical stance, a stance that depends on discovering and maintaining in any writing situation a proper balance among the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character of the speaker. . . .[2]

It goes without saying that whenever students of the spoken word preoccupy themselves with the personal and verbal commitments that are implicit in all communicative speech acts, they also discover that the nature and consequences of the rhetorical stance are among their primary theoretical and practical concerns. So, whether one professes writing, literature, or oral communication, he is concerned to understand how didactic discourse works and what it accomplishes.

We should not, however, mistake parts for wholes. The rhetorical stance, with all its attitudinal, syntactic, and affective ramifications, is by no means the whole concern of the literary scholar nor of the student of human speech. From their jointly occupied protectorate, the region of the rhetorical stance, the rest of the natural territories belonging to these two classes of scholars stretch in different directions. Those of the student of writing and literature lie toward the boundaries of the permanent, the beautiful, and the freely imaginative; those of the student of orality lie toward the boundaries of pragmatic adaptation, corporeal symbolization, and the situational effects of human association. Where "the interests and peculiarities of the audience" are controlling influences for the maker or the critic of discourse, both classes of scholars share intellectual and pedagogical ground. But they will make little sense to themselves or to others if they do not remember that men fairly look toward different citadels from the place they occupy together: the commonwealth of the rhetorical stance.

Two distinguished scholars are instructive on the present point. In their *Theory of Literature* René Wellek and Austin Warren emphatically distinguish the practical or didactic from the literary.

> The pragmatic distinction between literary language and everyday language is much clearer [than distinctions based on choice of words or sensitivity to the potentials of words as signs]. We reject as poetry or label as mere rhetoric everything which persuades us to a definite outward action. . . . This conception of literature is descriptive, not evaluative. No wrong is done to a great and influential work by relegating it to rhetoric, to philosophy, to political pamphleteering.[3]

I wish these sometime teachers of mine had not attached *mere* to rhetoric, but their central point states a fact of intellectual life. There is a vast body of discourse that is *not* dominated by the rhetorical stance.[4] With a great portion of that discourse the English profession must be concerned. By contrast, one who professes the study of orality will be concerned with that literary segment of discourse only peripherally or avocationally. The reason is not that he is a determined philistine. The reasons lie in the nature of speech acts—the behaviors which he has chosen to study.

Recent inquiries by such philosophical analysts as P. F. Strawson, J. L. Austin, Maurice Natanson, Stephen Toulmin, and others have helpfully clarified some of the forces that make oral discourse essentially non-literary. For example, the everyday language philosophers have made clear that a communicative oral act entails as givens: (1) that speaker and respondent knowingly accept *personal* relationship as a fixed and constant control over the meanings of their communicative behavior; (2) that participants in oral exchanges commonly place their personalities—even their selfhood—at risk by their willingness to engage with another; (3) that by tacit understanding sufficient reasons *as defined by the respondent* will determine how the relationship shall develop.[5] I submit that literature does not normally emerge under such conditions; yet these and other similarly particularizing covenants are inherent in almost all events involving oral communication. This is why the scholar devoted to the study of orality begins to speak as a layman when dialogue turns from the rhetorical stance to literary value.

The distinctions I have been making are not just theoretical; they are also visceral. Each may test himself by inspecting his own response to some words by the late R. P. Blackmur. In his "Notes on E. E. Cummings' Language," Blackmur wrote:

> Since people are occupied mostly with communication and argument and conversation, with the erection of discursive relationships, words

> are commonly spoken and written with the least possible meaning preserved, instead of the most. . . . Only the outsides of words, so to speak, are used; and doubtless the outsides of words are all that the discursive intellect needs.[6]

Here Blackmur is thinking about linguistic aspects of the rhetoric in which students of writing and of speech have common interest. Let each reader test his scholarly inclinations accordingly. As a student of orality, I find my professional interest is at its peak when I read observations of this kind. Each clause—almost each phrase—contains a comment or a hint about the kinds of linguistic and situational forces which I must probe and try to explain all the hours of my professional life. But my involvement diminishes just where I suspect the professional interests of many members of the National Council of Teachers of English will begin to rise—at Blackmur's next words. The passage I have quoted continues:

> But when a word is used in a poem it should be the sum of all of its appropriate history and made concrete and particular in the individual context; and in poetry all words act *as if* they were so used, because the only kind of meaning poetry can have requires that all its words resume their full life: the full life being modified and made unique by the *qualifications* the words perform one upon the other in the poem.

Now, Blackmur has passed to matters more relevant to questions about what is sublime, beautiful, and permanent than to questions about available arguments appropriate to specific circumstances, particular audiences, and the characters of communicators. The point I wish to make by this contrast is simply that we do not all respond with the same enthusiasm to the *two* aspects of rhetoric of which Blackmur speaks. And recognizing that there are these legitimate, elemental differences in the interests of scholars is fundamentally important if one is to appraise realistically the uses of collaboration in teaching and research.

The rhetoric that is extensively relevant to writing and inclusively relevant to communicative speaking is the *first* rhetoric of which Blackmur wrote. Respecting that rhetoric, students of speaking and writing have work to do together. But they will not work easily, be clear to themselves, or wisely teach their students unless they recognize that legitimate preferences and professional interests lead some men from the discursive relationships of symbols toward study of practical effects while different and equally legitimate interests lead others from those same discursive relationships toward study of the ultimate aesthetic experiences that language can generate. There are, in short, practical, preferential, and philosophical reasons why speech departments and English departments, speech associations and English associations, ought to collaborate in efforts to enlarge human understanding of the rhetorical stance. But there are equally good reasons why theory of literature and theory of orality will always treat of matters more different than like. Let us not even suppose that theories of writing and theories of speaking treat identical matters—until we have *proved* it so. We shall not gain much from repeating the mistakes of the belles-lettristic rhetoricians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—mistakes that reduced generations of rhetoricians to commenting on the laws of *the* sentence, *the* paragraph, and *the* four forms of prose discourse.

It seems to me that Professor Booth's concise expression of an essentially Aristotelian concept of rhetoric defines a significant territory of common interest for the speech profession and the English profession. I have nonetheless stressed our separatistic concerns lest in enthusiasm for common causes we disregard the centuries of intellectual history which have demonstrated that when rhetoric pretends to be theory of literature *and* theory of propositional discourse *and* theory of orality, it falsely describes all. We are not so wise about the rhetorical stance and its consequences that we have need to conquer poetic and orality in the name of rhetoric. There is work enough to do if students of the written and spoken word concentrate their collaborative efforts on how pragmatic, didactic verbal behavior is created and has effects.

Consider just two of the many kinds of questions that desperately need answering.

What characterizes the intellectual experience by which propositional composition is efficiently carried out? What creative experiences are they that produce and integrate propositional, didactic statements? Aristotle, Cicero, Juan Luis Vives, Francis Bacon, and others would have us believe the maker of propositional discourse first canvasses a catalogue of *topoi* or topics; by what we might call autosuggestion, he startles from these places statements pertinent to his purpose and theme; then, by recourse to procedures of induction and deduction he assembles his statements into negotiable and influential reasonings; these he further assembles by rule and reason into a propositional discourse. Is that the way it works? If not, what comprehensive counterexplanation shall we put in the place of this, the only comprehensive analysis of rhetorical *inventio* ever promulgated?

Men can speak incisively about the intellectual processes by which experiments are and ought to be designed. Procedures for mathematical and statistical analyses are described and systematically evaluated daily. Social scientists and philosophers examine with some precision how the human mind attacks and solves problems when working at its best. But what have we to say that is at once exact, general, and confirmable about how editorial writers, speech makers, and essayists work their minds in the experience of creation? There is no more fundamental question to be asked about the rhetorical stance than how content and language come into being within the mind that has adopted that posture. And to advance toward answering such a question will require us to study comparatively the experiences of both writers and speakers. Their creative experiences may or may not be alike.

Another equally important question is: What concepts and constructs are *most* useful if one wants to say how one piece of propositional discourse is like or different from another? This is a question Professor Robert M. Gorrell raised when he observed that a comprehensive theory of rhetoric "needs to be based on fresh understanding of what modern prose is like."[7] Now, we rely for the most part on a few precise and many vague rubrics when we attempt to describe the features of didactic prose. Aristotle said, and social scientists confirm, that it is pertinent to say something about the credibility of Lincoln, Cardinal Newman, or Red Smith if we undertake to tell why their compositions seem superior to those of their peers. We also know it is useful to say whether a communicator lined up his propositions in comprehensible order. But when we have remarked on these things, most of us–if pressed–begin distinguishing among sentence structures and degrees of logical validity and the like. Then, the linguist replies, arguing that our observations on sentence structure are inexact. When we talk of the logic of popular discourse, philosophers point out that many among them doubt that formal logic yields meaningful observations even about philosophical argument, much less discourse addressed to the populace.

The fact is that teachers of English and teachers of speech are trying to theorize about and to teach composition of didactic discourse by means of nebulous and debatable concepts. To what extent are these meaningful and *reliable* constructs: "the sentence," "the paragraph," "style," "tone," "exposition," "argument," "description," "critical thinking," "analysis of the subject," "adaptation to the audience"? We are well stocked with rules about these matters, but despite our many opinions we have no very precise ideas concerning just what phenomena and what forces such sanctified terms are supposed to represent.

There is mystery enough to occupy willing speech-English collaborators for a long time if they jointly undertake to understand what the rhetorical stance really is, how it works, and why. The questions I have mentioned only hint at possible starting points for realistic programs of study and experimental teaching.

Where and how does all this collaboration begin? I think it can only begin when and where teachers and scholars of writing and speaking conclude that they badly need to understand didactic discourse and its effects better than they do. Each will then discover that he must learn from the other and that collaborative inquiry, within the territory of shared concerns, is an inviting venture. Common questions draw inquirers together as names and administrative structures cannot. Revolutionary curricular changes seem to me beyond our present horizon. First, there is hardheaded defining, describing, theorizing, and experimenting to be done. To a very limited extent this process has begun, as our journals and interassociational projects testify. Real progress, however, waits upon a genuine commitment by our educational institutions, our academic departments, our professional associations, and ourselves as individuals to the proposition that discovering how didactic discourse is made and how it affects readers and listeners is a proper preoccupation of humanistic scholars. The omens are favorable, if we do not foreordain our own confusion by supposing that the theory of written composition, the theory of orality, and the theory of literature are congeneric constructs just because the rhetorical stance is one feature of each.

NOTES

1. W. Rhys Roberts (trans.), *Rhetoric,* 1413b, O.P.

2. Wayne C. Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," *Toward a New Rhetoric,* Papers from the 1963 Conference on College Composition and Communication (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1963), p. 3.

3. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, 1956), p. 15.

4. It deserves notice that Wayne C. Booth calls his *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) a study of an "arbitrarily isolated technique" of fiction: "I have, in short, ruled out many of the most interesting questions about fiction." pp. vii and viii.

5. P. F. Strawson, "Intention and Convention in Speech Acts," *Philosophical Review,* LXXIII (1964), 439-460.

J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words,* ed. J. O. Urmson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 108-119.

Maurice Natanson, "The Claims of Immediacy," *Philosophy, Rhetoric and Argumentation,* eds. Maurice Natanson and Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), pp. 10-19.

Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), esp. chapters 1 and 3.

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The Paragraph: Dancer in Chains

Virginia M. Burke

The English paragraph, as a distinct unit, is a Johnny-Come-Lately to prose, to rhetoric, and to pedagogy. Unlike words and sentences, which have been treated extensively by rhetoricians ever since the Renaissance, the paragraph languished unnoticed until the second half of the nineteenth century. George Campbell ignored it in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), though his occasional use of the word suggests that he thought the paragraph might exist. Nor is it mentioned by Kames, Blair, or Whately. But Alexander Bain devoted a forty-five page chapter to it in his *Composition and Rhetoric,* published in 1866. Thus Bain was the first rhetorician to recognize the paragraph as a distinct unit.

Texts in rhetoric and composition by American authors were few until English took the lead over the classics in American schools and universities; but by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, texts addressed to the lower schools as well as to colleges and universities were increasing rapidly. Among rhetoricians publishing between 1878 and 1891, John F. Genung of Amherst, and A. S. Hill and Barrett Wendell of Harvard took particular pains, and space, to discuss the paragraph. With the publication of Scott and Denney's *Paragraph-Writing* in 1894, the paragraph "arrived" in an entire book devoted to it.

In spite of the concentration on it after 1890, I am not convinced that the paragraph is well defined even now, either in the pages of texts or in the minds of teachers. Let me recall for you Fielding's lines in Chapter I, Book V, of *Tom Jones,* where Fielding guns down critics as "men of shallow capacities," inclined to "mistake mere form for substance," to "adhere to the lifeless letter of the law and reject the spirit." The critic turned legislator and judge, Fielding continues, has established "many rules for good writing . . . which have not the least foundation in truth or nature, and which commonly serve for no other purpose than to curb and restrain genius, in the same manner as it would have restrained the dancing master, had the many excellent treatises on that art laid it down as an essential rule that every man must dance in chains."[1] It is my impression that in too many rhetorics and too many classrooms, the paragraph continues to dance in chains.

There is ample evidence that the paragraph was not sharply defined in the minds of many English prosaists, for it was often not distinguished from larger units (chapter and section) or from smaller units (sentences). Some writers frequently produced short paragraphs of fewer than three sentences—Defoe, for example, in his *Essay on Projects* and Johnson in *Rasselas* and the *Rambler*. When this practice was common, it tended to restrain paragraph expansion. Some writers—among them Lyly, Spenser, Defoe, Johnson, and Walton—produced a high number of single sentence paragraphs, in which the single sentences were usually inordinately long. This practice seems to indicate that these writers frequently regarded sentences and paragraphs as identical or, more precisely, equivalent. Some writers averaged such a high number of words per sentence and sentences per paragraph that they appeared to confuse paragraphs with sections or chapters. Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* is an extreme in this direction with averages of forty-one words per sentence and forty-five sentences per paragraph.[2] Taylor and Lowell, though centuries separate them, show high counts in both respects, with Lowell more than occasionally writing paragraphs of over 2,000 words. Milton seems to have had it both ways: frequent single sentence paragraphs and frequent extremely long paragraphs. Apparently, in the minds of seventeenth, eighteenth, and even nineteenth century writers, paragraphs were often confused with both larger and smaller units.

At the heart of this confusion of units was the extremely long sentence, whether periodic or "loose" in structure. The English period, rising in the late sixteenth century on Latin models, reaching extravagance and collapse in the Jacobeans, yet continuing as a highly sophisticated form through the next two centuries, assumed a bulk, complexity, and independence which we associate more with the paragraph than with the sentence today. With its center of gravity at the end, it moved to full semantic circle through an elaborate involutional sequence of hypotactic and balanced elements. While the period dominated the thought and art of many distinguished prosaists, the so-called "loose" sentence was even more in bondage to colon and semicolon so that it, too, assumed unwieldy length and frequently collapsed into disjointed phrase and clause heaps. The fact that for centuries so many writers preferred to bind so many elements into long single sentences delayed dispersion of these elements into the separate sentences required for the paragraph as Bain first described it.

If the paragraph, as we know it, is possible only when internal arrangement is possible, and if internal arrangement is possible only when there are *several* sentences to organize, then the paragraph is a recent phenomenon. This was the conclusion of E. H. Lewis in his study entitled *The History of the English Paragraph*, the single scholarly study of the paragraph that I have been able to discover. Lewis observed that components essential to the paragraph appeared as early as Tyndale, but that these were neither well realized enough nor free enough to synthesize into a clearly differentiated unit until late seventeenth century. And even then, not all components were fully active in the prose of most distinguished writers.

The components Lewis had in mind included the concept of unity of thought and purpose without which paragraphs are mere aggregations. Lewis found this unity at a high level only in eighteenth century writers—Addison, Hume, Johnson, and Burke among them—with Macaulay alone surpassing them in the nineteenth century.[3] Other components include preference for the word order native to English; control and variety in sentence length; and the short sentence, by Lewis's definition a sentence under fifteen words. Lewis concluded that Tyndale was our first "tolerable" paragrapher; that Temple, rather than Dryden, gave the paragraph settled shape; and that Burke, in his oratorical prose, was the "earliest great master" of the paragraph.

Unity of thought and purpose and the presence of *several* sentences seem to be the two minimum essentials for the paragraph. Alexander Bain must have thought so, for all six of his laws assume the presence of several sentences, and five of his laws relate to unity. His first law aims for unity through coherence. Here he exploits semantic and syntactic modes of directing, relating, and dramatizing thought: cumulative, adversative, and subordinating conjunctions; illatives and bridging phrases of all sorts; parataxis; repetition; inversion; and so on. His second law, closely related to the first, calls for semantic and structural parallelism. His third is the germ of the "topic sentence," which should "indicate, unless obviously preparatory, the scope of the paragraph." His fourth law calls directly for unity by implying sustained purpose and forbidding digressions and irrelevancies. His fifth requires consecutiveness, that is, "proximity governed by affinity." And his sixth calls for proportion between principal and subordinate statements so as to reveal their relative importance.

Inadvertently perhaps, Bain created a few confusions which have plagued us ever since. The first confusion arises when we learn that his six laws pertain to all units—sentence, paragraph, section, chapter, and book. Only his third law on the topic sentence has somewhat special application to the paragraph, and then only to one kind of paragraph—the logical-deductive type. Thus it is difficult to conclude that Bain fully defined the paragraph even by contrast. The second confusion arises when he states that between one paragraph and another there is a bigger break in the subject than between one sentence and the next; here, it seems to me, he ignores the "wave" characteristics of the paragraph, characteristics governing its relationships with neighboring paragraphs. Bain's view of the paragraph seems to be a particle view in Pike's sense of the term; and Bain reinforces this particle view by analogizing the paragraph to the sentence. Treatment of the paragraph as particle alone and as analogue to a unit included in it does not seem to be enough to bring the paragraph to full definition.

II

Barrett Wendell, in his *English Composition* (1891), and Scott and Denney, in *Paragraph-Writing* (1894), necessarily found their guidelines in Bain; but the two books develop along very different lines.

Wendell reduced Bain's six laws to three rules—the familiar Unity, Coherence, and Mass (or Emphasis), which he applied, again following Bain, to all units of writing. He tells us that Unity requires grouping of elements around one single idea. A paragraph has Unity, he says, "when its substance can be stated in a single sentence." Mass, he tells us, requires that the chief parts of a paragraph "should be so placed as readily to catch the eye." Wendell's test for Mass is puzzling indeed: "A paragraph whose unity can be demonstrated by summarizing its substance in a sentence whose subject shall be a summary of its opening sentence and whose predicate shall be a summary of its closing sentence, is theoretically well massed."[4] Some critics believe that Wendell is here describing the paragraph that ought to be. I should dislike to think so, for his concept of Mass freezes the paragraph as particle by excluding its wave characteristics. If paragraphs danced before this legislator got to them, surely they were paralyzed forever after by his overschematization.

Scott and Denney were more able theorists, more serious scholars than Wendell. They were familiar with his Unity, Coherence and Mass, but they bypassed these in their book to set up five laws for the paragraph. Their law of *Unity* is Bain's concept of oneness in aim and affinity in thought. Their law of *Selection* highlights a sifting process so that not all that might be said will be said; but only that which will best give force and emphasis to the main idea. Their third law of *Proportion* makes more explicit Bain's implication that a unit of thought may need reduction in status and, consequently, in structure, to achieve proportion between major and minor elements. Scott and Denney follow Bain in their fourth law of *Sequence*; but their fifth law of *Variety* stresses diversity insofar as this is consistent with purpose and thought—variety in sentence length and structure; in phraseology and ordering of details; and in paragraph length, as well as in methods of development.

Scott and Denney admit that if the law of unity is clearly understood in its largest sense, it would include their selection, proportion, and sequence. But apparently they suspected it would not be, for they insist that each of their five laws merits study for itself. Thus they keep the field of paragraph study wide instead of narrowing it by overschematization and undue abstractionism.

Wendell's theory of the paragraph was mechanical; Scott and Denney's organic; Wendell analogized from the smaller included unit of the sentence; Scott and Denney avoid flat insistence on this point. Wendell froze the paragraph as particle, ignoring its relationships to larger units, its wave characteristics; Scott and Denney taught that "Whatever peculiarities of function or structure a paragraph possesses must be explainable by its relation to the function and structure of the whole composition."[5] Wendell presented the paragraph in almost tropical terms; Scott and Denney viewed it as an organic part of a larger movement of thought and allowed it reasonable options within this larger movement.

It may seem regrettable that Wendell, with his easy formulas and his visual view of composition, determined, far more than any of his contemporaries, the direction texts and teaching were to take during the Reform Movement of the 1890's. The Harvard Committee on Composition and Rhetoric, after investigating writing practices in preparatory schools, lamented in its 1892 report that it had found "only here and there the trace of an idea that the end of preparatory instruction in English Composition is to enable those taught to write the English language easily and well."[6] In view of the widespread influence of the Harvard Reports, it was no accident that the theme-a-day or, more practically, the paragraph-a-day, became the most pervasive and controversial fad of the 1890's in the teaching of English. With Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis solidly entrenched as coordinate principles, too often mechanically applied, the stage was set for the treatment of the paragraph as particle alone, and as a rather absolute particle at that.

It took over twenty-five years for another scholar to challenge Wendell's triad, but Lathrop of Wisconsin did so in 1918, observing that the triad had remained since Wendell's time "unchanged and almost unchallenged as the basis of our instruction in the sentence, the paragraph, and the whole composition." Lathrop considered Wendell's Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis poorly conceived and superficially applied. He characterizes the triad as follows:

> Unity is the unity of details assembled around a principle; coherence mainly closeness of relation between a part and its neighbors; mass or emphasis the relative distinction of parts to the eye. In fine, the whole treatment rests upon the idea of intelligent aggregation.[7]

The problem goes far deeper, Lathrop believes. It arises from Wendell's concept of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis as *coordinate* principles, a concept which discourages the view of a composition as a "process of development thought of as a whole." Lathrop argues that coherence—orderly sequence—is not coordinate with unity but, rather, an aspect of it. And mass, or emphasis, is coordinate neither with unity nor coherence, but rather, an aspect of coherence; for emphasis is the "realization of the central directing principle of a composition." Paragraphs, then, in Lathrop's view, offer a variety of successive experiences designed to express the primary unity in thought and purpose which conceived them. "There is only one principle, unity," says Lathrop, "of which the other two are manifestations or phases or subsidiary consequences. The principles of structure all rise from the principle of unity."[8]

Like Scott and Denney, Lathrop viewed a composition as process, "a thing fulfilled in time." So he questioned rules and formulas which obscured this view. Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis, taken as coordinate principles, obscure the treatment of a composition as process, as a whole, and are fraught with dangers: the danger of "wooden insistence on a topic sentence"; the danger of overexact marking off of paragraphs; the danger of applying the three principles in mechanical succession; the danger of a mechanical view of structure itself, almost an absolute view. If we follow Lathrop's closely reasoned critique, we see that he calls for a fuller and more flexible definition of the paragraph not only as particle but as wave and as significant segment in a total field of meaning. His critique might be regarded as an effort to release the paragraph from the chains Fielding speaks of.

III

A few later rhetoricians tried to break away from the tunnel vision of some earlier men. Brooks and Warren reminded students that the paragraph "has its part to play, its own particular job to do, in the larger structure of meaning." Perrin described the paragraph as "a stage in the flow of a writer's thought" with the task of imparting the movement of his thought. But the treatment of the paragraph solely as particle, as an isolated, though internally analyzable unit, still lingers in our texts and our teaching as the main approach, often the only approach to the paragraph.

Where are we, then, in our understanding of the paragraph? Not much further than our colleagues were seventy years ago.

Our problem is dramatized, I think, in our confusions over the term *topic sentence*. To some, *topic sentence* is synonymous with *thesis sentence*, a term too narrow and demanding to dominate practice; indeed, it does not dominate practice outside of the classroom. To others, *topic sentence* is widely inclusive, ranging from those sentences which express the major idea of the paragraph to those sentences which merely signal some sort of change. This is stretching the familiar meaning of *topic* quite a bit, it seems. To still others, *topic sentence* means "top" sentence, which, in turn, may have no other meaning than "first"—the first sentence in the paragraph—or may mean "topic sentence" expressing the main idea. Aware of these ambiguities, we have added a few more terms: *introductory* and *transitional*. And in our worst moments we are inclined to brush away introductory and transitional sentences to get on with the business of analyzing sequences within the paragraph. At the end of a paragraph which, before we took it out of context, was probably related to a larger field of meaning, we struggle to find a concluding sentence and grieve when it is not there. Many paragraphs do not conclude much of anything. But we want them to.

This dilemma dramatizes the problem because it is precisely here that we are confronting the "wave" characteristics of paragraphs as well as the fact that paragraphs move paratactically and hypotactically, not only internally but in relation to neighboring paragraphs, to sequences, and to the total field of meaning.

If we propose to analyze the paragraph as it is, we must deal with its propensity to interlock and relate with material outside itself. This approach, which is difficult and not well explored, forces us to combine methods of analysis in order to deal with broader movements of thought. Thus we must analyze sequences in some synoptic way which will reveal both semantic and syntactic-structural relationships.

Recently a graduate student of mine told me that one of her students had discovered in an essay a paragraph of one short sentence of four words. The youngster said to her, "He can write this way but we couldn't get away with it." Herein lies the danger of legislation and of the familiar dictum that one must not break rules until one knows the rules. What rules? When rules and formulas do not match reality outside the classroom, students are trapped and paralyzed in a linguistic ghetto they cannot break away from, even in advanced writing, without feeling that what they have previously learned is a pack of lies or what they are learning in advanced writing is the whimsy of a teacher who is some kind of kook.

James Sledd recently pointed out that "When we talk about style, we are not talking about rules, but about choices." And further: "Stylistically, we choose those forms of language which will say best what we want to say or best make what we want to make; and the ideal choice is based, so far as it is conscious, on all relevant considerations of ends and means."[9] If we teach by the rule, by the formula, we cut students off from rhetorical possibilities they need for experimentation. And we bind paragraphs so that they cannot dance even the first few steps of the minuet.

It is true that the paragraph is a Johnny-Come-Lately to prose, to rhetoric, and to pedagogy and that it is not yet fully defined or understood. By its very nature, its behavior must be more fluid, more unpredictable than the behavior of the sentence. If it is to retain its distinct character, it must resist narrow schematization. How we teach the paragraph remains our choice. Individualists among us may insist that a man's prose is his castle where he may do as he wishes with his paragraphs. Or we can avoid the whole problem by declaring that the paragraph was really the child of the power presses, that it is a mere concession to readers, and that it is, in current editing practices, the province, and the playground of the rewrite men.

But I like to think, with Lathrop, that prose is not a lost art but an art form; and that students, both as readers and as writers, should experience it in well-wrought prose. And with reasonable freedom and imagination, perhaps some of the well-wrought prose they see will be their own.

NOTES

1. Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1952), p. 160.
2. Edwin H. Lewis, *The History of the English Paragraph* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1894), p. 35.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
4. Barrett Wendell, *English Composition* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), p. 129.
5. Fred Newton Scott and Joseph V. Denney, *Paragraph-Writing* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1894), p. 96.

6. Charles Francis Adams, E. L. Godkin, and Josiah Quincy, "Report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric," Report No. XXVIII (May 1892) in *Reports of the Visiting Committees of the Board of Overseers of Harvard College* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1902), p. 151.

7. E. B. Lathrop, "Unity, Coherence and Emphasis," *University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature*, No. 2 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, September 1918), p. 80.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

9. James Sledd, "On Not Teaching English Usage," *English Journal*, LIV (November 1965), 698.

Field and English

Edward R. Fagan

Rationale for field as a generating concept for the teaching of English pivots on three fulcra: first, on an understanding of its origins; second, on an understanding of its interdisciplinary implications; finally, on an understanding of its utility for teaching English. Support for each of these three perceptions—origins, interdisciplinary nexi, utility—is the rhetoric of the material which follows.

I

By 1860, James Clerk Maxwell, British physicist, had determined to study electric and magnetic fields in great detail. Between 1860 and 1868 he reported his findings to the Royal Society and by 1868 had evolved some twenty equations for describing what he called an "electromagnetic field." It is important to note that the 1868 papers had combined the originally separate "electric" and "magnetic" fields. Fully aware of the implications this unified field had for his fellow researchers, and as reported by Sir William Davidson Niven (editor of Maxwell's papers) in *The Scientific Papers of James Clerk Maxwell*, Maxwell described this unified field as ". . . a complicated mechanism capable of a vast variety of motion [where] the motion of one part depends, according to definite relations, on the motion of other parts." Maxwell's insight—that the field observed, affected, and took part in the observation—is still a major factor in all research. In fact, the so-called Hawthorne effect (that subjects who know that they are in an experiment will, unless carefully controlled, behave in ways that bias the study) is clearly implied in Maxwell's work. But the idea of total investigation of a total phenomenon is what Maxwell described as "field." And it is this idea of totality that will be the theme of the kaleidoscopes which follow.

While it would be impractical to name all of the physicists who have extended Maxwell's field idea, some of them are Michael Faraday, Albert Michelson, Michael Pupin, N. A. Lorentz, Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, and Norbert Wiener. All of these physicists accepted in some degree the concept of a unified field theory. Their unified field theory differed from Maxwell's in that Maxwell divided his electromagnetic field into two layers which Freeman Dyson, mathematical physicist at Princeton, described in the September 1958 edition of the *Scientific American:*

> . . . In the lower layer there exist electric and magnetic fields which

> satisfy simple wave-equations and travel freely through space in the form of light or radio waves. In the upper layer there are material objects, energies and forces.

With physicists' exploration of quantum mechanics, Maxwell's two layers tended to disappear for all practical purposes. Using Dyson's article as our authority for this judgment, "Quantum mechanics ultimately makes no distinction between matter and electricity. The two-layered view of nature thus becomes consistent and universal."

Turning to the so-called father of quantum mechanics, the late Niels Bohr, an even more startling statement about field totality was attributed to him in the December 1957 edition of the *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.* "The unique separation of subject and object in the description of atomic phenomena is no longer possible." Depending on the frame of reference, we might even say that the unique separation of subject and object in English is, in field theory contexts, no longer possible.

Moving from physics, the science of its origin, field theory appeared in psychology, through the writings of Kurt Lewin in the Fifty-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education entitled *The Psychology of Learning* (1942), through Gardner Murphy's *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structures* (1947), in biology (not under the title "field" but with the holistic viewpoint), through the recent translations of writings of Claude Bernard *An Introduction to Experimental Medicine* (1957), and Walter Canon, *The Wisdom of the Body* (1939); and in what has come to be called "interdisciplinary studies" (the appellation connoting common principles drawn from many disciplines), through the writings of Kenneth Boulding, *The Image* (1956) and Oliver Reiser *The Integration of Human Knowledge* (1958).

Examining the complete writings of any of these men leads us to the notion that, as Harlow Shapley Paine, Professor of Astronomy, Emeritus, at Harvard University, put it in World Book's *Science Annual* (1965), "The more we probe into the heart of matter . . . the more we are struck by the oneness of science." This science oneness espouses principles which are equally urgent for our discipline, English. Among the more important of these principles are the following: recognition of common vocabularies in defining concepts, of common processes for examining phenomena, of common variables in need of control, of common attitudes toward the roles of flexibility and regulation in data interpretation but, above all, recognition of the principle that all phenomena examined–organic or inorganic–are parts of matter, bits of information from a total universe where data constellations constantly shift to make the parts change the whole *and* the whole change the parts–*simultaneously.* There can be no "either or" in this philosophy; instead, S. I. Hayakawa's *et cetera* must obtain. If *et cetera* connotes failure to know all variables, that is exactly its meaning to scientists, and they have codified this *et cetera* principle into what they call the

Principle of Uncertainty. Such a principle does not mean that anarchy and chaos reign supreme (though a few of our colleagues in art have made such an interpretation) rather, it means that generalizations, not prescriptions, are made from observed data, and that these generalizations are changed as further investigation shows the need for such change. Furthermore, the principle holds that while technically it may be possible to arrive at a state of prescription, probability is that such a level of exactness will seldom be reached because of the dynamic nature of phenomena in all fields, including that of the English language.

II

That the foregoing concerns for field and its methodological implications have direct impact on our work in English can be supported by examining recent statements from an aggregate of disciplines. While such an examination could profitably range from astronomy to zymurgy, sampling theory and field principles suggest that education, social philosophy, psychology, and English will provide points for plotting field theory's influence on a continuum of subjects.

Education viewed through the prism of the Educational Policies Commission's (EPC) *The Central Purpose of American Education* (1961) reveals strong field theory bonds. To ensure that its message was clear, David Russell, EPC's secretary, revised the manuscript thirty-six times before its release. The message is that all education be based on modes of thinking different from fact-based, three-dimensional precedents of the past, that it must become fourth-dimensional yet sustain the humanistic tradition of a rational logos. As described in the Commission's publication, nucleus for its rubric is as follows:

> [People accept Einstein's concept of curved space] not on Einstein's authority, but on their awareness that he used rational methods to achieve it and that those who possess the ability and facilities have tested its rational consistency and empirical validity.
>
> In recent decades, man has greatly accelerated his systematic efforts to gain insight through rational inquiry. In the physical and biological sciences and in mathematics, where he has most successfully applied these methods, he has in a short time accumulated a vast fund of knowledge so reliable as to give him power he never before had to understand, to predict and to act. That is why attempts are constantly being made to apply these methods to *additional areas of learning and human behavior.* (Italics mine)

Trying to make this abstract concept more concrete, Mr. Russell recently used an illustration from a course in time and motion study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). M. I. T. students, after preliminary exposure to the theoretical aspects of the course, spent a set period of time in a local factory around the Boston area. During this five-week practicum each student devised a system for increasing the efficiency of a single worker he observed and persuaded management to put his recommendations into operation on a trial basis. The paper required for the course asked each student to describe why, after the more efficient method was tried for a while, the company had abandoned it. The field principle involved in the assignment was that the total operation, not just the specific technique or worker, is required for effective change in holistic industries.

Total operations are also the concern of an interdisciplinary group of social philosophers, psychologists, and physicists who have formed a Society for General Systems within the confines of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. One of the founding fathers of the new Society, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, in his sociological text, *Problems of Life* (1960) defines the General Systems Theory as:

> . . . a logico-mathematical field, the subject matter of which is the formulation and derivation of those principles which hold for systems in general. A 'system' can be defined as a complex of elements standing in interaction.

The mathematical armature of the "System" uses the principle of isomorphism as its rationale. Without going into the mathematical constructs involved, isomorphism oversimplified refers to the similarity or likeness of form in diverse domains. But the determination of similarities and likenesses of forms, as sociologist Pitirim Sorokin pointed out in *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1962), requires the individual's participation; or, in his words, "Meaningful and logical integration can only exist where there is mind and meaning."

While there are myriad writers who represent viewpoints of the Society, those previously mentioned reveal the fieldlike characteristics of the Society; the focus on holism and oneness; the interacting of individual with field to establish a solipsistic logos; the demarkation of one from many without fragmentation; the attempt of diverse disciplines to make the exploration of a common problem the result of a mutually shared endeavor.

Psychological research has tended, since Kurt Lewin's field theory, to become fragmented to the point where "closure" permeates most contemporary psychological reports. By definition, closure represents the acceptance of a part as the whole.

So prevalent is the substitute of parts for wholes in modern psychology, particularly through so-called empirical research, that Nevitt Sanford, Institute for Human Problems at Stanford University, made an eloquent plea in the March 1965 *American Psychologist* for his colleagues to return to the holistic idea as a basis for their research. Sanford points out that today's scholarship is focused on

> . . . the production of knowledge rather than on its organization . . . [that] there are few attempts at systematization of the sort that would put particular facts in perspective and show their significance. . . .

Trying to get at the importance for looking at the thing that ties parts and wholes together, Sanford continues:

> . . . Truth may be discovered by abstracting parts from the whole and studying them intensively, but the whole truth can never be discovered in this way. It is the whole truth, and particularly the truth about wholes, that is needed for practice.

Sanford concludes his plea by identifying holistic or field problems which he feels his colleagues should study; then he points out "study of these [problems] will require interdisciplinary theory and multidisciplinary research teams."

English shares these interdisciplinary concerns, but in a more restricted and somewhat conservative frame of reference. Such a judgment depends on how we define English. Psycholinguistics, semantics, linguistics, communication, and literary criticism have tacitly espoused interdisciplinary studies for some time, and documentation for that judgment can be found in a five-year study of such interrelationships entitled *Field: A Process for Teaching Literature* (1964). And it is with some sense of kinship that I find belletrist Wayne Booth of Chicago obliquely supporting that book's viewpoints in the October 1965 *College English.*

Booth, relying somewhat on Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) and *Design for Learning* (1962), makes the following statement:

> The point is to remind students first that you can't talk about everything at once; second, that there are more interesting questions than any one person's spontaneous responses would suggest; third, that there are meaningful canons of discussion in dealing with every meaningful question; and fourth, that the canons differ somewhat from question to question.

Booth's four points might serve as summary of the foregoing material and as outline for what is to come. Each of his four statements applies a field theory principle: first, that there are cognition levels for the study of literature which demand winnowing and priority identifications; second, that the composite of language is such that it can never be fully apprehended but must be sectored on a probability utilization, which, in turn, is determined by actuarial and validated priorities; third, that system, not chaos, determines the structure of literary inquiry; and finally, that point of view and interpretative technique differ from literary selection to literary selection—an excellent illustration of the relativity principle.

Education, social philosophy, psychology, and English identify common concerns for holism based on principles adapted from field theory in the physical sciences, and we need now to explore field theory utility in English.

III

Field as the shaping die for English continuums reflects a truism expressed by Northrop Frye in the October 1964 edition of *College English:* that the essence of any art cannot be taught, cannot be "learned" in the usual sense of that word. Frye concluded, "Criticism cannot make this act of possession . . . what it can do is weaken those tendencies within criticism that keep the literary work objective and separated." Echoes of Frye's statement blend with foregoing statements from field theory: that it is no longer possible to separate subject and object (Bohr) . . . that total involvement is necessary to understanding of field (Sorokin).

Much of our contemporary art reflects this fusion of subject and object—particularly the Theatre of the Absurd—but Stephen Spender, British poet, critic, and editor, felt that it was stretching a point to say that Joyce's interior monologues, Proust's time theories, and Gertrude Stein's continual present are evidences of scientific influences on literary form. But Spender did admit in his article, "Is A New Literature Possible?" (*Saturday Review,* September 22, 1962), that Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* was "the only work which suggests a true parallel to science."

More than a "suggestion," *Finnegans Wake* is an isomorphic analogue of field theory. Point for point, principle for principle, process for process, the *Wake* is a graphic explication of Maxwell's and Bohr's conclusions. Detailed documentation for this judgment is beyond the scope of this presentation, but such documentation can be found in David Hayman's *A First-Draft Version of Finnegans Wake* (1963). Hayman's six-year study of the nine thousand pages of manuscript turned out by Joyce over a seventeen-year period presents any reader with more than enough data to occupy his scholarly inclinations about any facet of English as a discipline.

Applying field theory principles to the *Wake,* we have first to compare, analogically, Joyce's field with Maxwell's field. Instead of electromagnetism, Joyce focused on language where language was viewed as a field that expands and contracts within a universe just as electric and magnetic fields do. Continuing the analogy, we could identify two layers to Joyce's field—an upper or denotative layer, and a lower or connotative layer.

What determines the boundaries of a given language utterance or an electromagnetic field at any microsecond is the immediate situational power focus. Depending on this focus, words are selected to fit unique situations. Situational words are put into patterns which suit the conventions required. Rhyming words with rhythmic stress for poetic situations; etiquette words from an appropriate usage level for a formal speech situation; tenebrous and lugubrious words for a gothic narrative situation. These words are always selected from a total field or universe which, for each individual, has fluctuating boundaries but is as unique as a fingerprint. Writers develop this uniqueness to a fine degree so that a given writer's "style," e.g., Hemingway, Faulkner, can be readily identified by sentient readers.

Hayman made such "style" identifications for the *Wake* which, though arbitrary, are useful for his taxonomy and are congruent with field theory principles. These Joycean composition techniques are sometimes mixed within a single paragraph; at other times they are, seriatim, a sustaining structure for passages, pages long. Six in number, each of Hayman's arbitrary techniques for classifying Joyce's style is followed in parentheses by the field theory principle it illustrates: straight composition (English as object); revise and complete (English as subject); episodic (English as irrational dynamic); episodic fusion (English as language universe); piecemeal or mosaic (English as individual involvement); framing (English as archetype).

Detailed explication of these six Hayman-identified techniques is beyond our field theory purview, but one example which illustrates how field theory principles articulate with Hayman's classification is suggested by the following passage taken from Hayman's photocopy (page 10) of Joyce's manuscript. (Changes in Joyce's first draft are in quotes; later changes are in italics; still later changes are in brackets).

> Such "Just so stylled" are their petals are each of all has a stalk unto herself love and all of their understamens is as open as she "he can" posably feel it she and turned "tournasoled" straightout or sidewaist *according to the courses of things* [feminite] towooerds him, their lord *& stigmatiser,* that they may catchcup in those "these" chalicottes "calyzettes" "those" parryshoots from his one "muscalone" pistil, (O my goodness goodmiss! O my gracious graceness greatness! O my pricelestly preshoes!) as "while" dewyfally as dumbelles they allisten to his elixir.

Commenting on interlocking levels within the paragraph field, Hayman describes the effects of Joyce's revisions: (p. 11)

> He has brought into focus themes latent in the primitive version, significantly developing both the dark side and the light side of this Alice in Wonderland ("allisten") and *Just-So Stories* sequence. He has added more than a pinch of the precious to the style. Repeatedly, he has enriched the general tone and effect. But the *formal balance* has been *maintained* by the insertion of compensating terms; thus neither tone nor effect have been altered; the new implications have broadened the original context. (Italics mine.)

Finnegans Wake is itself a frame in the Hayman-Joyce sense because Joyce in his seventeen-year work used language as a total field to describe his personal perceptions of all major events in Western civilization from ancient Greece to pre-World War II Ireland. Literature is not the sole focus of his work; history, mythology, foreign languages, science, religion, art, music, and many other disciplines must be thoroughly mastered by the reader if he would begin to give meanings to the *Wake*. Just the explication of the little passage quoted above demands a knowledge of Kipling, of Irish mythology, of general anthropology, of botany, of biology, of French, of etymology, of phonology, of history, and perhaps of many other disciplines. Depending on the reader's background, the virtual history of mankind could be read into the *Wake*.

Finnegans Wake may be an extreme example of field theory but the concepts it implies are not. Any publication in the English language has implicit in it the same rubrics as the *Wake*: language is the individual's total field from which composition, literature, reading, speaking, and any other subfocus of English is derived. As such, language is re-formed for different purposes; poetry, drama, speech. Metaphorical aspects of language are infinite and constantly changing. With these language truisms as base, any paragraph in any publication can be analyzed for structure and content within a specified reference frame to provide students with an empathy toward language and a system for its analysis which will help them to discover language as the tenuous web that binds man to man.

Field Theory and Literature

William Holtz

> Does it not shew us, by the way,—how the arts and sciences mutually befriend each other?
> *Tristram Shandy,* II. 17

> That is well said, replied Candide, but we must cultivate our garden.
> *Candide,* chapter 30

The interdisciplinary study is apt to be a lonely child in the academic community, of dubious legitimacy and suspect merit. For although man's most honored intellectual ambition might be to discern unity in the manifold bits and pieces of his knowledge, in the academic world research multiplies distinctions at such a rate that scholars are hard pressed to discern unity even within their own disciplines. Thus arise the departmental barriers, and division, if not divisiveness, within the intellectual pursuits, as the strength of competence is forged at the price of exclusion. For this strength we accept the corresponding weakness: groups of specialists who talk too often only to each other, and who too often find the stuff of another discipline mysterious or apparently trivial. Yet, for some the impulse toward unity is compelling, and belief in its value an article of faith.

This paradox becomes especially difficult for the student of literature in an age dominated by a scientific-utilitarian outlook. Personally convinced of the value of his subject, yet frequently unable to demonstrate this value by any standard of utility without reducing literature to something else (literature *as* psychology, *as* social theory, etc.), he finds it tempting to exalt the barriers between his field and others, contenting himself with his own garden of esoterica and extending (at the worst) the necessary principle of exclusion to an artificial principle of exclusiveness. Thus, if his colleague in the sciences has a demonstrably firm grasp on one of the tentacles of truth, the man of letters need not vacate his claim to relevant knowledge. His argument, generally, is that literature (or, broadly, the arts and humanities) provides a way of knowing and a kind of knowledge essentially different from that afforded by science: he is swift and articulate in telling us what science cannot do, and what poetry can.

I would not minimize this distinction, for it is important. But any movement from this point toward a common ground becomes extremely difficult; for the scientific-minded may object that it is unscientific, and the literary critic that it is unliterary. Within the physical and social sciences, a core of common problems has been the nexus of an emergent interdisciplinary movement which one of its spokesmen, Kenneth Boulding, describes as foreboding "a profound reorganization of the departmental structure of knowledge and of academic life." But Boulding is significantly silent about literature and the arts generally; and there is little doubt that the student of literature would be deeply mistrustful of the reorganization Boulding foresees so hopefully.

The following study must be viewed against this troubled background. It grows out of a sense that there are fundamental connections between the arts and the sciences that are at least as important as the differences between them; and although it tends toward that elusive unity, its actual purpose is relatively modest. It attempts to remain at a supradisciplinary level of abstraction where literature cannot be transmitted into the substance of another discipline, but the underlying assumption is that the man of letters and the man of science have important things in common. And if it does not bring either to the promised land, it will, hopefully, bring each to a juncture at which he can talk with some purpose to his colleague on the other side of the hedge.

I

If any concept can be said to unify the attitudes of the various modern scientific disciplines—physical, biological, social—toward the phenomena they study, it would probably be the concept of a field approach. This field approach, or field theory, permits definition only in the most general terms, for it develops specific colorations and characteristic vocabularies within any given discipline; basically, however, it can be said to reflect an awareness that to investigate a phenomenon without regard for its context is to distort the essential nature of that phenomenon—that any given thing participates in many larger systems (fields) which *always include the observer himself,* and in which all elements interact in a complex, dynamic balance. The effort of the investigator is to perceive his data in a relevant field, to determine the relationships defining this field, and to discover the forces within it that make for change or stability. On such a level, then, can the physicist, the social scientist, and the biologist be said to occupy a common ground.

And there may be a place in this ground for the student of literature as well, if he will look for guidance to the structural linguist, who should be able, if anyone is, to mediate between the world of science and the world of verbal art. Specifically, in the field theory developed by Kenneth L. Pike in his study of grammatical structures, we find a set of concepts which would seem to have a wide range of adaptation for literary analysis, especially in defining problems and suggesting methods of investigation. Pike's approach grew out of his attempts to discover a universal grammar: as he worked with certain fundamental problems in language, he became increasingly aware of the need for a comprehensive theory which would permit him systematically to order and describe his data, and which would guide his further investigations. At the same time, he was struck with the similarity between the problems he faced and those in modern physical science. Pursuing the analogy, he developed an approach to language that has proved extraordinarily flexible and fruitful, allowing him to deal with problems unassailable by conventional methods of analysis.

At the root of Pike's theory is an epistemology which conceives of human perception as "trimodal," consisting of three complementary, mutually exclusive modes of perceiving the data of the universe. These are 1) the particle view, which isolates a thing from its context, such as a word considered individually, or a hand gesture as a detached movement, 2) the wave view, which perceives the thing within a continuum, merging with other adjacent things, such as a word within the phonological movement of a sentence, or the hand gesture within a fluid sequence of bodily movements, and 3) the field view, which perceives the thing as an element of an organized whole, such as a word as a part of a system of grammar, or a hand gesture as part of a vocabulary of meaningful gestures—signifying, for instance, *good-bye* in the United States, but *come here* in Burma. Each perspective can account for all of the data of any situation, yet each reveals it in a different way; and what we know of the world is a complex, shifting fusion of these perspectives. Thus the nature of the thing observed varies with the mode of perception, and because any single mode is not exhaustive, a principle of complementarity emerges: the thing is the sum of what we know of it in these different modes.

Despite its simplicity (really, because of this simplicity), the field theory is powerfully suggestive for other disciplines than linguistics. As an abstract account of the nature of reality, it can serve as a heuristic model, defining the main lines of inquiry for any subject. Deliberately pluralistic, it provides a way of resolving many *either-or* dichotomies. Based on modes of perception, it can be turned on any object of perception; and because any such object can be viewed macrocosmically (as a particle in an encompassing field), or microcosmically (as a field composed of discrete particles), or dynamically (as wave: as a particle in motion, or as a field in motion: the world perpetually perishing and perpetually renewed), it yields a view of the universe as a fluid, shifting, hierarchical complex of interlocking systems, extensible in many planes to the very limits of man's ability to perceive and conceive: "Really, universally," as Henry James said, "relations stop nowhere." And although the various disciplines have their individual subject matters, if we assume them all to be grounded in certain natural modes of perception we can infer that principles of field analysis in one discipline should be adaptable to similar problems in another. Recently, for example, Pike's approach has been extended and adapted in a theory of rhetoric: the principles and techniques he has used to investigate grammatical structures, now suitably modified for work with units beyond the sentence, have led to a theory of effective verbal communication that provides coherence in a subject heretofore characterized by largely random and discrete observations and allows a more discriminating analysis of rhetorical structures than have most conventional studies of rhetoric. My purpose here is to suggest in a general way the relevance of the field approach to the study of literature, and then, by transferring concepts useful in linguistics into a problem in literary criticism, to show how such an approach can illuminate a fundamental problem.

II

Let us recognize first that such an approach accommodates (or lets us allow for) both critical pluralism and subjectivism. For literally a work becomes a different thing within each field or system of reference—theological, political, psychological—and one of the elements of the field in which the critical act takes place is the observer himself, whose special bias, limitations, or genius may make his perception obtuse, irrelevant, or inspired. It is also an approach adaptable to what has long been called the New Criticism; for the aim of an analysis by complementary modes of perception is precisely to describe the thing in itself, and if we posit a given work as the field under critical scrutiny, we have simply brought a special technique to the task that the New Critics have set for us. But in the present view we can also see the limitations of the New Criticism; for although it is salutary for some purposes to think of the poem as a thing in itself, we must recognize that it exists in a larger universe, consisting (at least) of the author, the reader, and the body of artistic conventions that let us discuss it as a poem. These other elements are all, then, legitimately within the province of literary criticism.

The following discussion, however, will be directed toward the specifically literary criticism, which fastens upon the work itself and attempts to elucidate its unique nature; but the issues raised will have implications for other kinds of literary criticism as well. What I would suggest about most of such studies is that they might be described as particle-and-field analyses: that is, typically, images or symbols or actions are isolated and identified, then viewed as parts of a comprehensive system. Considered somehow as simultaneously coexisting elements, they comprise the structure of the work. Yet we recognize that to define this structure is an act apart from the experience of the work: to perceive the patterned relationships is not the same thing as to submit oneself to the experience of reading the novel; to identify the elements of the author's style is not to feel its force. I labor the obvious here to make a point: that the data of our literary analyses come to us fused in a continuum of experience, a rhythmic wave that undeniably is, in one aspect, the work of art, but an exceedingly difficult aspect to discuss. And it is the aspect of wave that I have chosen to focus on in what follows.

The relevance of the problem generally is apparent in three recent studies which have independently arrived at formulations of a wave aspect of literature. In the first of these, William Blissett attempts to elucidate the basic nature of poetry by drawing an analogy with physics: in modern physics the ultimate units of a thing are either particles or waves, depending on how they are observed; similarly, poetry can be thought of in terms of images *or* lines, but not as both at once:

> The line is the unit of sound and movement and is the bearer of *figurae verborum*: it is capable of imitating rhythms, inner and outer, anything with a temporal dimension. The image is the unit of poetic statement, of fused thought and feeling, the means by which the poet makes sense of the sensible world, the bearer of *figurae sententiae;* it brings into instantaneous relationship things in a field and hence has a spatial dimension. The really difficult question rises now: how can image and line both be units of poetry? Perhaps, if the analogy with physics holds, they can't be, but are.

Let us note in passing that the trimodal concept explains this paradox. Blissett suggests that the proper focus of criticism is upon the image; the effect of the line he finds to be beyond analysis, beyond intellectual apprehension, a quality to be judged intuitively, like ritual, as either efficacious or not.

Kenneth Rothwell comes to much the same conclusion in an essay which attempts to describe the structure of narrative by analogy with the structure of physical reality. Literature he describes as a structure composed of layers of ascending complexity ranging from molecular particles of phonemes and morphemes through the broad value systems of humanistic thought. But to analyze the structure, he points out, in a sense is to kill the thing dissected, for interwoven with the laws of structure are the laws of motion, the tensions that unite the static elements of structure and produce a rhythmic effect that lies at the very heart of our experience of literature. "At this point," he observes, ". . . the vocabulary of literary theory collapses: no words or symbols can capture the record of what happens." This collapse is a matter we will return to later.

Last, Joseph Frank, in an important study of literary form, offers an analysis grounded in aesthetics rather than in science. He draws upon the distinction made by the eighteenth century German theorist Lessing (*Laocoon,* 1766) between literature as a time-art and painting as a space-art, and attempts to describe a quality of modern literature which he terms *spatial form.* Spatial form is, implicitly, the opposite of temporal form (i.e., the ordering of material on a sequential principle, such as the causal chain that makes a plot) and grows out of an attempt by the writer to negate the temporal principle and to force apprehension of his work as a total thing in a moment of time (such as a picture), rather than as a sequence of events. In James Joyce's *Ulysses,* for example, the narrative is so fragmented, the key allusions and symbols scattered so apparently at random, that the reader must continually suspend reference until he imperceptibly gains a sense of Dublin in its entirety: Joyce demands that the reader achieve

> "the same instinctive knowledge of Dublin life, the same sense of Dublin as a huge surrounding organism, which the Dubliner possesses as a birthright. Such knowledge, at any one moment of time, gives him a knowledge of Dublin's past and present as a whole . . . [in which] he can place all the references in their proper context. . . . Joyce . . . proceeded on the assumption that a unified spatial apprehension of his work would ultimately be possible."

Different as these studies are, they manifest a common recognition of a seldom discussed aspect of literature—as an experience in time, or, in terms of our epistemology, as wave. Blissett and Rothwell skirt the issue as an important but impenetrable mystery. Frank's argument (we might restate it) is that in some modern narrative one of the most fundamental wave patterns, the dramatic action, has been subverted or suppressed in order to force perception of an instantaneous field view (which leaves us with the question forced upon us by our epistemology, what other wave patterns remain, or are substituted?). A central dilemma faces us: of the three ways of knowing literature, we seem to be able to talk effectively about only two, relying for the third generally on some figurative account of our feelings—impressionistic criticism, the affective fallacy, the collapse of critical vocabulary that Rothwell mentions.

This dilemma might be clarified if we consider it as an analog of the distinction between space and time. Both are convenient abstractions for some purposes, but life as we know it is lived in both simultaneously: we cannot think, really, of space apart from some time, nor of time distinct from location; yet for purposes of analysis we often consider them separately. Especially has this been true in distinguishing the provinces of the arts, as in Lessing's classical formulation. The study of literature is in fact largely the study of sequences of events in time, whether we speak of the overt action in a drama, the succession of images in a poem, or the alliteration of a single line. What should become clear, however, is that this succession of events is, for purposes of analysis, conceived of as a static thing, all parts of which are simultaneously present: what is experienced as a dynamic wave is analyzed as a static field, in a sense spatially rather than temporally. The very logic of language assumes that the flux of experience can be immobilized, segmented, and categorized: quite literally, we cannot discourse about life without reducing it to symbols which are susceptible to graphic representation; our alphabet and our typography are devices for converting temporal, experiential processes into static, conceptual patterns which can be seen whole, analyzed, and manipulated.

What, then, is the value of approaching literature from a trimodal theory of perception? Is it simply to point to a mystery, to define an impasse? It is, in part, if we concede that to see a problem clearly is in itself a value. But beyond this there are, I think, important things to be gained by recognizing and accepting the fact that we can only deal with flux by immobilizing and spatializing it. For if it is all we can do, we should try to do it as assiduously and self-consciously as possible, striving to translate as clearly as we can one mode of knowledge into another.

Let us consider for a moment what many teachers of literature do for their students when they discuss the action of a novel or drama. They step to the blackboard and draw an inverted V, with varying degrees of distortion. And then they talk of exposition, complication, rising action, crisis, falling action, and resolution, referring to the peaked line as the graphic equivalent of that action. Yet it is not often recognized that what they do here is to apply one of the fundamental discoveries of mathematics, a technique for translating temporal experience into graphic form: just as the speed of a moving body is plotted against coordinates of time and space, so do they plot a sense of the literary experience: and if we were to draw the L-shaped legs of the coordinates, we would see that one coordinate clearly is time; the other is something less clearly definable—tension, we might call it, some quality that, like time, is a function of perception, but not, like time, objectively measurable. Thus we find the literary man drawing upon techniques from physics and mathematics to objectify and in some measure to quantify his literary experience: the blackboard drawing is not essentially different from the oscilloscope reading of the phonologist or the EKG charts of the cardiologist. What we must recognize, however, is that the gross curve he draws upon the board is also the carrier (or perhaps the result) of manifold smaller waves as well as a part of larger waves: the laws of motion function through all the hierarchies from phonology to myth. Theoretically, if he could graph all the functions on one chart against the time of his progress through the work, he would have a complete structural analysis.

Most literary critics, however, would not be much taken with this kind of research, which seems rather more like the work of the psychologist who, for his own good reasons, has had subjects reading *Winnie-the-Pooh* with electrodes attached to their limbs. The physiological data he gathered would not seem to be the kind the student of literature can use. But I would suggest that much remains to be done with this basic approach by sensitive and tactful readers, mindful of Aristotle's warning that each problem permits its own degree of certainty, tracing in their own sensibilities the rise and fall, emergence and disappearance, growth and dissolution of the segmented waves or particles that are used as literary data. At the very least it might serve as a device for ordering one's impressions; more fruitfully, it might serve to discover and describe aspects of structure.

Two basic problems dog this approach: identification and measurement of the function that is set up against the line of time. The measurement of the pulses of felt experience can probably be only a subjective determination of more and less, most and least: those aspects amenable to precise measurement and mathematical treatment seem to be of little relevance to literary studies. The problem of identification is even more difficult. For although one dimension of our literary experience is clearly temporal, the other dimensions are less clear, and would seem to consist of both innate and conventionally established potentials for response, a complex set of tension systems or interest patterns which determines what we apprehend in our environment and how we order it: a gross analogy might be drawn (statically) with the antenna of a television set, or (dynamically) with the current flowing through the systems of the set when it is on. At this point we must admit, despite the work of gestalt psychologists, that we do not know enough about our own mental configurations; and it still remains for the introspective critic to discover in his own impressions universally valid norms.

A fascinating model, however, for charting these obscure dimensions can be found in Kenneth Boulding's book *The Image*. The image, which Boulding describes upon the analogy of a complex molecule, is the constantly growing and changing subjective structure that the mind creates from its experience with the world. Upon analysis (Chapter 4) it can be seen to have at least eleven dimensions, lines along which change can take place as new perceptions are incorporated into an increasingly complex balance. These dimensions, we might guess, are the qualities that we would measure, if we knew how, upon the other axis of our hypothetical chart—modifications of our own images, as irreversible as those wrought by time, which might be described as *more* or *less* during the course of our experience with a poem, a play, or a novel. The reader's encounter with literature becomes, in this view, a part of that growth, differentiation, and restructuring of his essential being that is life itself.

And in another discipline we also find attempts to deal graphically and spatially with the dynamic flow of experience: in the field theory developed by the social psychologist Kurt Lewin. In an effort to describe the dynamics of human behavior, Lewin conceived of what he called *life-space*, which might be described as an individual's sense of his environment as perceived through the filter of his values—a space, in other words, the nature of which modulates with the response of the observer to what he perceives, which becomes increasingly differentiated into regions as he structures his experience, and in which tensions or forces operate in shifting patterns of conflict and reinforcement. In this space, action can be described as gravitation toward the most valued region of the life-space, and the path of action as the arc along the most attractive rather than the shortest path between two points. Lewin's attempts to embody the various psychological dimensions of the life-space diagrammatically, and to depict the path of action through value regions, is fascinating and suggestive: his two and three-dimensional diagrams are necessarily reductions of the actual complexity of human behavior, but they represent an effort to define the essential structure and operation of the subjective substratum of overt behavior; and they would seem to hold promise as a way of describing such things as the development of action in drama and the delight of indirection in poetry. Once again, I would suggest that these concepts, used with both imagination and restraint, might help the critic better understand that behavior which he values so highly, the response to literature.

A third approach to the problems posed by the movement of literary experience is suggested by Kenneth L. Pike's attempt to explain, in concepts generalized from linguistics, the phenomenon of change. Change is fundamental to structure, for the recurring elements which the critic abstracts and hypostatizes as structure are seldom identical, but rather appear as the-same-but-different, as repetition-with-variation. In other words, they change; and the sum of these manifold changes is the increment of the reader's experience. The critical question is how we get from one unit of the wave to the next: what path do we follow from one unit to another which we perceive as the-same-but-different? Pike offers what might best be called a way of thinking about change, a set of concepts which suggest what to look for in tracing any given change; his illustrations are drawn from linguistics and from cultural anthropology, but the principles are highly general. The key concept is that of a shared component, and the central assumption is that change can occur only over a bridge of such shared components or within a hypersystem of which the units are components. In this sense there is, as in physical science, no action at a distance, and if the reader accepts this axiom he must ask, once he has identified recurring elements, over what bridges has he passed in making this identification?

III

By way of conclusion, I would like to test these approaches, in a very tentative way, upon a work which has baffled and fascinated readers since the eighteenth century, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.

First, considered as a narrative, *Tristram Shandy* proves extremely difficult to discuss conventionally: there is no clear continuity of action, no large arc from problem to resolution, literally no temporal coherence. Were we to try to graph tension against time, we would get a series of smaller individual arcs—one for each scene, chapter, or digression, but generally showing little continuity or increase in tension from one to the other. But were we to graph the appearance of static, pictorial scenes against the progress of the proposed narrative, we would get a radically peaked line with an immense static dimension as opposed to a scarcely perceptible temporal line. To point out that *Tristram Shandy* consists largely of a series of tableaux would surprise no one, but to oppose this series to the line of time points up an important problem in *Tristram Shandy* and in narrative generally: the conflicting claims of space and time, of the sequential logic of language and action and the "all-at-onceness" of perception and conception. As Tristram says:

> Could a historiographer drive on his history, as a muleteer drives on his mule,—–straight forward . . . without ever once turning his head aside either to the right hand or to the left,—–he might venture to foretell you to an hour when he should get to his journey's end;—–but the thing is, morally speaking, impossible: For, if he is a man of the least spirit, he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid. He will have views and prospects to himself perpetually solliciting his eye, which he can no more help standing still to look at than he can fly. (I.xiv)

Tristram Shandy in fact manifests as clearly as does *Ulysses* the spatial form of which Joseph Frank writes: Sterne has destroyed the narrative wave in the interests of psychological realism, and his work demands apprehension spatially, Frank would say—as field rather than as wave, we might say now.

The field in this instance is simply the field of Tristram's consciousness, his own introspective sense of identity in which he rummages for images and incidents, all potentially present at any given moment, as he attempts to tell his story. The arena for this action is not objective space any more than the time is objective time—rather, it is a fluid life-space modified each moment by Tristram's consciousness, what Boulding would call Tristram's image of the world. And it is this life-space that we share with Tristram as we read: "As you proceed further with me," Tristram tells us, "the slight acquaintance which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and that . . . will terminate in friendship. . . . then nothing which has touched me will be thought trifling in its nature, or tedious in its telling" (I.vi.). In fact, our perception of *Tristram Shandy* as a whole thing largely depends upon our transferring from our own introspective sense of identity the assumption that the fragments so erratically juxtaposed are the mental property of a similar self.

In this regard, *Tristram Shandy* can be seen as an expression of a philosophical problem germane to the eighteenth century but as old, indeed, as Heraclitus. For if we cannot step into the same river twice, neither can we be sure that we are the same persons at each attempt: how can there be continuity of self in a world of ceaseless change? Of the empirical philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, only David Hume accepted the logical implications of a world in which the mind knew only its own series of separate, different, and discontinuous sensations—that the idea of a personal identity was a mistake, although an almost unavoidable one. "The identity which we attribute to the human mind," he argued in *A Treatise Of Human Nature,* "is not able to run the several different perceptions into one, and make them lose their characters of distinction and difference, which are essential to them" (I.vi.). From our present perspective, we can see that Hume had encountered the limitations of a purely particle view of phenomena: he could account for all of the data, but not for the continuity between them. And it might be said that Sterne's effort in *Tristram Shandy* was in fact to run perceptions into one, to embody the sense of a continuous self persisting through discontinuous experiences.

Our attempts to deal with the temporal nature of *Tristram Shandy* have thus far revealed it as a series of discrete particles in a shifting, fluid, but coherent field. Can we further describe its principle of continuity, the wave that replaces the conventional narrative line? One approach, as we have seen, is to ask what the particles share, what bridges there are between them. In a rather superficial way, we can point out that they share features at their margins—e.g., characters that remain the same, although the situations change—and that at times scenes share a core, although the characters are different (as when Trim and Bridget in the kitchen mimic the courtship of Toby and the widow in the parlor). Across such bridges we can say that Tristram's mind moves by a Lockean association of ideas, which has often been cited as the principle of movement in *Tristram Shandy*. But association, modern psychology reveals, must be motivated, and there is, it would seem, deeper rhythm, a wave of felt experience that undulates through these disconnected episodes, rising from what must have been a characteristic obsession of Sterne's mind and moving through a subjective medium generated by the episodes themselves. At this level, of course, we are talking about thematic interpretation, the implicit view of life that informs the work and constitutes the hypersystem within which movement occurs. This, I would suggest, is a vision of man's comic impotence, his inability to cope, manifested objectively in the dubious sexuality of all the Shandys but reverberating throughout repeated cycles of desire and impotence, effort and frustration, aspiration and failure—culminating, of course, in Tristram's failure ever to tell the story he begins from the moment of his conception. Some such wave as this can be said to provide continuity in our experience with *Tristram Shandy*.

Perhaps this analysis has not revealed anything about *Tristram Shandy* that the careful reader would not be able to find for himself. The aim, however, has not been so much to explicate a work as to illustrate an approach. The study of literature is hampered, I think, by a lack of a general system of inquiry; and the argument here is not to give up intuition, but simply to look for a guiding rationale. What I have hoped to demonstrate is how concepts helpful to the scientist in making sense out of the data of experience can be useful to the student of literature, and specifically, how an epistemology derived from modern field theory can help him to define problems and to look for answers. As is the case with any system, the early uses are apt to be crude or oversimplified, real gains coming only with later, more sophisticated studies. Field theory, I hope, will lead to such gains: its possible future might be described in the words of Kurt Lewin, who turned to analogy to defend the indeterminate nature of his own studies. An emerging discipline, he contended, must follow the

> same procedure used in the exploration of the resources of a new land: small paths are pushed out through the unknown; with simple and primitive instruments, measurements are made; much is left to assumption and to lucky intuition. Slowly certain paths are widened; guess and luck are gradually replaced by experience and systematic exploration with more elaborate instruments. Finally, highways are built over which the streamlined vehicles of a highly mechanized logic, fast and efficient, can reach every important point on fixed tracks.

This, of course, is the vision of a scientist; and the ideal of mathematical certitude shines through it. Such zeal needs to be tempered with a clear sense of the actual nature of the subject; for although the scientist by one standard can dismiss this inquiry for its imprecision, the literary critic, by another standard, can deplore it as Procrustean surgery. At this point, I would slip out between them, and leave as my spokesman the scientist and literary critic whose sense of proportion I have sought to emulate. "Our discussion will be adequate," Aristotle once noted (*Ethics* i. 3. 1094b), "if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions. . . . We must be content . . . in speaking of such subjects and with such premises to indicate the truth roughly and in outline, and in speaking about things which are only for the most part true and with premises of the same kind to reach conclusions that are no better. In the same spirit, therefore, should each type of statement be received."

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Against the Typology of Styles*

Louis T. Milic

A typology is a classification and a typology of styles is an arrangement of styles into categories, such as periods of time (Elizabethan, Restoration, Victorian, or modern), kinds of influence or derivation, such as Euphuistic, Senecan, Ciceronian, or of impression, such as ornate, formal, learned, simple, plain, and casual. Such classifications are based on the belief that groups of writers have styles that are alike and that any single member of such a group is typical of it. I am convinced that this belief, which has a certain antiquity in literary history, is false and unnecessary. It cannot contribute anything to our understanding of literary style. Moreover, we can explain stylistic phenomena without the aid of such categories.

The assumptions on which I base my disagreement are the following:

1. A writer's style is the expression of his personality.
2. A writer must write in his own style.
3. A writer can be recognized in his style.
4. No writer can truly imitate another's style.
5. The main formative influences on a writer are his education and his reading.
6. A writer's language is governed by the practice of his own time.
7. Language changes gradually with time.

There is nothing very revolutionary here. Much of it is summed up in Buffon's aphorism: "Le style, c'est l'homme même."

I shall illustrate my thesis by reference to Restoration prose. Let me begin by quoting an authority, Professor James Sutherland:

> . . . Can we talk . . . about "Restoration prose," or are the two words merely a convenient way of referring to the prose that was written in England between 1660 and the closing years of the century? For myself, I believe that there *is* a prose style that is characteristic of the Restoration. . . . and that this style is the genuine expression of a particular and definite type of culture.[1]

Professor Sutherland's studies of English prose need no encomia. I have selected his work because it is quite representative of typologi-

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cal *Stilforschung* in its assumptions and superior to most in originality and scholarship. My intention in singling out his work is to point to some limitations of this tradition.

The problem that I am interested in discussing will come into focus if we ask where this prose is to be found. Here is his answer:

> The prose I have in mind was written to perfection by Dryden and Halifax; with individual variations by such men as Robert South, Bishop Burnet, and Jeremy Collier; by Etherege and Rochester in their letters; with further variations by Roger L'Estrange in his pamphlets and translations; by Walter Pope in his *Life of Seth Ward* and by Robert Wolsey in his Preface to Rochester's *Valentinian*; by Thomas Sprat in his *History of the Royal Society* and by Robert Hooke in his *Micrographia*; and by many other minor writers. I do not think I should seriously confuse the issue if I added Cowley in his *Essays* and perhaps Stillingfleet in his *Origines Sacrae*. But I have got to admit that if there *is* such a thing as Restoration prose, not all the writers living in that period wrote it. There are a few of the greatest prose writers of the time whom I obviously cannot possibly include: one of these is John Bunyan, and another is Clarendon, and for various reasons I would exclude Isaac Barrow, the Hon. Robert Boyle, John Evelyn, Richard Baxter, Thomas Rymer, and such eccentrics as Thomas Burnet, the author of *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*. And I don't know what to do with Samuel Pepys.[2]

This is a very select list, almost an eccentric one. It says yes to Dryden but no to Bunyan, yes to Burnet and no to Clarendon, yes to Collier and no to Rymer. It mentions Robert Wolseley [sic] and Walter Pope, who are rare birds indeed, and yet talks of minor writers. Moreover, it leaves out altogether John Dennis, Thomas Traherne, Andrew Marvell, William Congreve, Sir William Temple, Samuel Butler, and John Locke, all of whom wrote prose of some distinction. Such a process of selection seems to suggest that writers of Restoration prose were not in the majority during the Restoration. In other words only some, perhaps a minority, of the writers of this time wrote Restoration prose. The typological criterion then is not merely chronological; there seems to be something else.

This new quality is sometimes called plain prose or the plain style. This well-known notion—that a change occurred in English prose style during the seventeenth century, in the direction of plainness or simplicity—has been present in the writings of literary historians for some time. A. A. Tilley, for example, in 1911, observed:

> Perhaps the most important literary achievement within this period is the creation of a prose style which, in structure if not in vocabulary, is essentially the same as that of today. . . . possessing before all things, the homely virtues of simplicity, correctness, lucidity and precision.[3]

The change can be illustrated very simply. The most dramatic way to sense its real force is to read ten pages of Milton's polemical prose and to follow this with ten pages of Dryden's critical prose. To most modern readers, this is like coming out of a tunnel into the sunshine. The typical response is, "How did this happen"; that is, "How did the English come to write so simply, so clearly, so informally after having written so much the other way?" The implication of this form of the question is that before 1660 everyone wrote like Milton and after that date like Dryden.

To promote this feeling or impression into a theory, it is necessary only to group a few extreme cases around our two antagonists in order to produce two schools. On Milton's side, we put Browne, Clarendon, Taylor, Lancelot Andrewes. . . . ; Dryden is teamed with Swift, Steele, Addison, Shaftesbury, Defoe . . . Examples are easily come by. The following pair of citations would find few to disagree that the first of the two passages is less plain than the second:

> Not to insist upon the examples of Moses, Daniel, and Paul, who were skilful in all the learning of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Greeks, which could not probably be without reading their books of all sorts, in Paul especially, who thought it no defilement to insert into Holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek poets, and one of them a tragedian, the question was notwithstanding sometimes controverted among the primitive doctors, but with great odds on that side which affirmed it both lawful and profitable, as was then evidently perceived, when Julian the Apostate and subtlest enemy to our faith made a decree forbidding Christians the study of heathen learning: for, said he, they wound us with our own weapons, and with our own arts and sciences they overcome us.[4]

> For there is a perpetual dearth of wit; a barrenness of good sense and entertainment. The neglect of the readers will soon put an end to this sort of scribbling. There can be no pleasantry where there is no wit; no impression can be made where there is no truth for the foundation.[5]

The second is in fact three sentences of Dryden, but together they take up less than half the space of Milton's single sentence.

If the case were always so clear, we should have no problem in characterizing plain prose and I would have no argument. Matter, however, does not follow categories. So for example, Isaac Barrow who is relegated to Professor Sutherland's NO list, is described in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* as noted for "the clearness and simplicity which under his influence began to mark the prose of the later seventeenth century." His general manner "is an anticipation of Addison."[6] To show the practical difficulties of this sort of classification, I shall give a passage from Robert South from the YES list as well as one from Isaac Barrow.

> We are all naturally endowed with a strong appetite to know, to see, to pursue Truth; and with a bashfull abhorrency from being deceived, and entangled in mistake. And as success in enquiry after Truth affords matter of joy and triumph; so being conscious of error, and miscarriage therein, is attended with shame and sorrow. These desires Wisdom in the most perfect manner satisfies, not by entertaining us with dry, empty, fruitless theories, upon mean and vulgar subjects; but by enriching our minds with excellent and useful knowledge, directed to the noblest objects, and serviceable to the highest ends.[7]

Now for the second passage:

> As nothing can be of more moment; so few things, doubtless, are of more difficulty, than for men to be rationally satisfied about the estate of their souls, with reference to God and the great concerns of eternity. In their judgment about which if they err finally it is like a man's missing his cast when he throws dice for his life; his being his happiness and all that he does or can enjoy in the world is involved in the error of one throw. And therefore it may very well deserve our best skill and care to enquire into those rules by which we may guide our Judgment in so weighty an affair both with safety and success.[8]

I wonder how many readers would be able to pick out the work of the Restoration prose writer from the other. Barrow's does not seem to be distinguishable from South's by means of the criterion of plainness. I am not suggesting that the *Cambridge History* is correct in placing Barrow in the plain group and Sutherland wrong in excluding him. I do not believe there is much evidence for either side and neither has offered anything like an incontestable or even a workable criterion. Calling it the plain style is not enough.

What is this plain style? According to Sutherland it is an English "simpler, less ornate, more colloquial, more practical."[9] A linguist might describe the syntax of Milton as nested or embedded and that of Dryden as linear. But neither of these descriptions will really help us when we come to average cases, such as those of South and Barrow, rather than extreme ones. The typological procedure is not very enlightening in this kind of problem. It tends to deal in impressionistic generalities, which may be adequate for getting a vague sense of the difference between two modes of expression but not adequate for analyzing the difference between two particular examples.

Whether one examines the claims of one set of theorists who try to account for the emergence of plain prose in terms of the influence of pulpit oratory, or whether one is willing to accept the views of those who attribute it to the influence of the Royal Society and its desire for scientific writing, or accepts the opinion that it derives from the conversation of well-bred aristocratic gentlemen, who prized easy informality, lack of affectation, and a stress on the colloquial, does not matter very much. All three of these explanations and any others that may arise are attempts to explain with ingenuity what can be explained without it.

I am prepared to concede without any reservation that the English of nearly any writer of the eighteenth century sounds different from that of most writers of the seventeenth. I am also willing to grant that the writing of many writers of the Restoration is easier to read than that of the subjects of the early Stuarts. What I am not willing to grant is that we need a theory of types in order to explain this development. The matter can be explained quite satisfactorily with some of the axioms cited earlier. On the scientific principle that an economical explanation based on opinions generally held is better than one requiring a number of dubious assumptions, I would suggest that the typological explanation of the plain style represented by Professor Sutherland be dismissed. I shall summarize the grounds.

Consider what we need to believe in order to accept a typological explanation of Restoration prose. First, we must believe that there is a hypothetical entity called Restoration prose, whose characteristics can be defined only generally. Second, we must agree that this entity is the common property of a certain number of writers of that period but not of some others, admittedly first-rank writers, and not only the work of a minority but of that minority only in certain works which can be specified. Third, we are invited to agree that the writers who partake of the mystic entity represent a significant subculture within the society, one which presumably is closer to the real work of the society than those outside it, however great the writers excluded may be.

The last of these points, that the writers who are thus isolated represent a significantly dominant aspect of the culture, cannot detain us long. Both common sense and statistics tell us that lists of members of an ingroup tend to be fallacious. The real members of the group may only be known to the truly *in* people, who keep their identities secret, like the Gray Eminence. Apart from the evident difficulty of at this distance assembling a group of writers who will constitute the spirit of the Restoration, it would seem even more hazardous to prefer the claims of one group over those of others. The courtiers no doubt had influence, but was it literary? The scientists, dissenters, the merchants, all had competing claims, not to mention the dramatists and the pamphleteers.

The constitution of the group representing the spirit of the Restoration raises insistent questions of logic. If Etherege and Rochester were members of the significant minority, why did this fact only make itself known when they wrote letters. Why was L'Estrange only *in* in his pamphlets and Cowley in his essays? More mysterious still, why was Walter Pope only part of the circle in a single *Life* and Wolseley in a preface to someone else's work? The inconsistency of such an argument requires no deep searching to detect.

The most interesting point is the first, the problem of describing the characteristics of Restoration prose. Description proceeds by the accumulation of detail, a sound procedure in dealing with style. But descriptions of style usually proceed by generalization, by abstraction of qualities from masses of detail. Style is difficult to handle simply because it is a mass of detail. To classify a particular set of such details by means of an abstraction is to make a claim that these details are more important than others, that they fall into a configuration and that this abstraction outweighs others that might be constructed out of the same materials. For example, when following the trend of modern comment we call today's prose colloquial or informal, we are constructing a category of informality with certain characteristics and are implicitly claiming that most of today's writing conforms to those characteristics. Both of these steps are more difficult than appears at first. Since we cannot examine all writing, how can we determine that today's prose is indeed informal? We cannot examine more than a fraction of it and that fraction may not be a true random sample. It is based on our preferences. The reader of the *Christian Century,* the *Journal of the History of Ideas,* and *Victorian Studies* will get a different idea of the state of modern prose than will the reader of the *New York Times,* the *New Republic,* and the *New Yorker* or for that matter the reader of *Playboy, Mad,* and the *Evergreen Review.* Unless we take special precautions to be objective and cross-sectional, our evidence will be hopelessly biased and we shall be making generalizations which, however perceptive, will be inapplicable to more than a segment of the population.

The problem of criteria is even more difficult: how do we decide what makes a prose informal? Many critics do this intuitively. Without pointing to anything in the language, they say it sounds informal to them. This kind of impressionism is equivocal: another critic may say it does not sound informal to him. There is no way to settle so metaphysical a dispute. A better procedure is to particularize informality by means of a set of indicia. When they are present, the prose can be called informal; when they are absent, the reverse. Unfortunately, this leaves a great many cases unsettled, when some of the indicia are present and some not, when some sentences are informal and some are not. No consistent classification can emerge from this kind of disorder. Unless a policy on such questions is established in advance, no statements of description can be made with reliability.

In other words, one important objection to the typology of styles is the matter of method or procedure. It is *practically* impossible to make an accurate generalization about an abstraction so remote and inchoate as the dominant feeling or quality of the writings of a group of people expressing themselves on every subject during a period of forty years. The human animal is too various to be so categorized. Group personalities of this kind have no reality, any more than national languages have a character, as once was thought. Only individuals have personalities and therefore only individuals can have a style.

Style has many definitions but most of them are merely casual variations on a theme. On the basis of the uncontroversial axioms I offered at the beginning of this paper, I would now claim that an individual's style is his habitual and consistent selection from the expressive resources available in his language. In other words, his style is the collection of his stylistic options. Options or choices are not always exercised consciously; they are often habitual practices of which the practitioner is as unconscious as he is of the way that he bends his leg in walking or the way that he ties his shoelace. His reading, the way he has been taught to write, the bent of his mind, have all influenced him in the direction of a particular uniqueness. To this may be added the ingredient of conscious rhetorical choice. The net effect is an individual style, which be it noted may be as individual among literary hacks as among literary geniuses. Milton and Dryden each write in their unique individual styles because of who and what they are. What divides them is personality; what unites them is chronology.

The language changes all the time, but it changes very slowly, at times so imperceptibly that it gives the illusion of being stable, so that speakers who become aware of changes raise passionate outcries about corruption and decay. All speakers are bound by these changes but not all writers are chronologically at the same point in time. At any given moment, there are writers imbued with the lexical choices and the syntactical options of a previous era. And there are some who are on the frontier of change, coining new words like any teen-ager. Thus the coexistence of several chronological states of the language at one time provides the medium within which the rich variety of individuals can express itself. Between these two poles, the changing language and the individual writer, all the facts of style can be satisfactorily accounted for.

The individual's style is the aggregate of his stylistic selections from the particular state of the language that he construes as the real one of his time. The consistent choices that he makes from it to serve his own expressive requirements constitute his style, his literary personality. It is evident that the writer's choices will be determined by certain fashions in education, in rhetoric, and in literature, but the main tendency of writers in a given time is to be unlike rather than alike. The notion of period styles underrates this tendency and implies a uniformity of expression which is wildly at variance with the facts.

The writers of plain prose or what has been called the clear stream—Dryden, Addison, Swift, Fielding etc.[10]—are granted by this typology a uniformity which is quite foreign to their practice. A selection of passages might be made from the works of any single writer to support the claim that he prefers short sentences or long sentences, few adjectives or many, and so on. Similarly, the plain style is not the prerogative of a given period; it is a rhetorical tendency which is present in all ages. A history of the plain style might be written showing that it arose in the sixteenth century and was practiced by writers from Bacon to E.B. White. The history of ornate prose would show a similar line, ending let us say with Churchill or Walter Lippmann.

The division of eighteenth century prose into the clear stream and the ornate one oversimplifies out of recognition the problems it is striving to solve. Most people in Johnson's time did not regularly write balanced Johnsonian prose, not even Johnson himself. Balanced prose, employing the devices of antithesis and parallelism, has been in some degree a feature of formal writing in all periods, including our own. It is my conviction that such classes as plain style, ornate style, balanced style may only be useful to describe individual sentences, paragraphs, or perhaps even whole compositions, whenever they may have been written. But when such classes are tied to chronology and culture, they imply more than can be justified by a strict examination of the facts.

The dominant modern style, according to some observers, is the plain or casual or informal style. Many teachers and writing advisors recommend the following of this model. Yet we know that many highly admired writers of the present day do not do so. Writers of great reputation practice more elaborate forms, not to mention the esoteric language of the social scientists.[11] Whatever may be the central characteristics of modern prose style, they are not likely to tell us much about modern writing because the average of a very large number tends to iron out interesting peculiarities. That is a great danger of excessive typology.

The typology of styles seems to have descended to us from the practice, standard in literary history, of grouping writers in schools of drama or poetry, such as the Georgic poets, the bourgeois dramatists, the graveyard poets, whose subject matter and formal manner coincided significantly. But types of styles, schools of styles, genres of styles, and periods of styles are not analogous entities. A writer's style emerges from the tension between the state of the language that he uses and the demands of his individuality striving to express itself with the same materials as other individuals and struggling against the restraining powers of fashion, tradition, and rhetoric.

Rhetorical training conditions both the writer and the reader and in that way may come to affect the language itself. The rhetorical inversion of one era is the normal word order of another. But the scope of rhetoric is limited and affects mainly the more visible outward aspects of the repertory of stylistic resources provided by a language. To be sure, some writers have more or less consciously emphasized certain rhetorical features in their writing (Gibbon, Johnson, Macaulay), but these are not by themselves significant. Rhetoric becomes significant when it can be related to the writer's unconscious expressive mechanism, when it represents the controlling power, both limiting and enabling, of outer form upon idea and meaning. In that sense, it becomes one of the contributing factors to the totality we call an author's style. The contribution of conscious rhetorical adornment to the total style of an author is put into proper perspective when his theoretical pronouncements about style are compared with his actual performance. When Swift tells us about his ideals of style, he is not giving an accurate description of what he actually does. His own practice is some distance away from what he thought he was doing or what he would have liked to do. In fact, in the words of one scholar, Swift was always struggling against a tendency to write in just the way he disliked.[12] If this is true, it surely refutes the arguments of those who would credit a writer with the power to alter his style at will, as if he had a wardrobe—or a stable—of different styles for different occasions.[13] The extent of his ability to adapt his style is probably limited to certain superficial aspects, among which are included rhetorical devices and diction.

In sum, the proper subject of stylistic speculation is the individual writer. To understand the style of the individual, we must concern ourselves first with the individual's writings and second with the linguistic resources from which his peculiar style is a selection. Typologies attract our attention to specious and minor similarities among authors. They are misleading because they take us away from what is really significant, the individual author's own peculiarity, his difference from his contemporaries, which is what is truly his style.

NOTES

1. James R. Sutherland, "Restoration Prose," *Restoration and Augustan Prose* (Los Angeles, 1956), pp. 1-2, O.P.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
3. A. A. Tilley, "The Essay and the Beginning of Modern English Prose," *The Cambridge History of English Literature,* ed. Sir A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), VIII, 368.
4. John Milton, "Areopagitica," *Selected Prose,* ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press Inc., 1947), pp. 218-219.
5. John Dryden, "A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," *Essays,* ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford, 1900), II, 81, O.P.
6. *Ibid.*, VIII, 296.
7. Isaac Barrow, "The Pleasantness of Religion," *Seventeenth Century Verse and Prose,* eds. Helen C. White, Ruth C. Wallerstein and Ricardo Quintana (New York: Macmillan Co., 1952), II, 178.
8. Robert South, "An Account of the Nature and Measures of Conscience," *Ibid.*, II, 186-187.
9. James R. Sutherland, *On English Prose* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 57.
10. James R. Sutherland, "Some Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Prose," *Essays on the Eighteenth Century Presented to David Nickol Smith* (Oxford, 1945), p. 94, O.P.
11. A number of critics, including Cyril Connolly and Roland Barthes, have expressed concern about the modern stress on a plain, featureless prose.
12. Jonathan Swift, *An Enquiry into the Behavior of the Queen's Last Ministry,* ed. Irwin Ehrenpreis (Bloomington, 1956), p. xxxi, O.P.
13. This is the so-called *persona* theory. See, for example, Paul Fussell, Jr., "Speaker and Style in *A Letter of Advice to a Young Poet* (1721), and the Problem of Attribution," *Review of English Studies,* X (1959), 63-67.

Swift and the Rhetoric of the Anglican Via Media

James J. Stathis

I

The negative character of the stylistic revolution that altered the course of English prose after the Restoration has been discussed so fully that little, if anything, remains to be said on the subject. The reaction against pulpit eloquence and the rhetoric of enthusiasm has been painstakingly charted.[1] But we have said little about the rhetoric that this reaction produced and the conviction that insisted upon its adoption.[2] We have, in short, failed to accent what we may call the *positive* character.

Many critics who have addressed themselves to the problem of describing the new rhetoric that emerged in the Anglican pulpit during the second half of the seventeenth century have persistently used such terms as *plain, unadorned, bare, direct, simple, informal,* and *naked* in their attempt to define its essential character—terms that are ultimately useless and misleading. The triumph of the new rhetoric entailed some simplification of sermon style and structure, but it did not mean that English prose had freed itself from the fetters of rhetoric, as those writers would have us believe who see in the new style a freedom from artifice. There is considerable artifice in the sermons of Tillotson and Burnet, Atterbury and Swift. It shapes and directs the meaning of these works. Because it does not exhibit itself as ornament and because it is rarely apparent on the surface does not mean, of course, that it is not present. Although the new rhetoric appears plainer and simpler than the old, its real character is to be found behind its plain surface in a rhetorical ordering that consists mainly of logical proof. What we have then is a rhetoric which reflects Swift's belief that "the greatest Art is to hide Art."[3]

Seventeenth century Anglican apologetics and sermons suggest that the reaction against the old rhetoric and the demand for something resembling reasoned discourse is directly related to the importance that such Anglicans as Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, and South placed upon reason in the interpretation of Christian doctrines.[4] In rejecting the fideist position that revelation alone can provide the grounds for religion, Anglicanism insisted upon the necessity in religion of common forms or common notions and right reason grounded on divine revelation.[5] It believed that reason was an important and dependable standard in matters of faith. For instance, Francis Atterbury remarks that "the Badness of any Doctrine, and its Disagreeableness to the Eternal Laws of Right Reason, be a certain Sign that it did *not* come from God. . . ."[6] And Robert South, who has been credited with leading the revolt against pulpit eloquence but who has not been numbered among the "Anglican rationalists," frequently stresses the necessary role that reason plays in religion. In his sermon on "The Doctrine of the Trinity Proved Not Contrary to Reason" (c. 1666) South observes that "reason is that into which all religion is at last resolved."[7] Swift's position is similar.[8] Believing that the essential nature of man is his rational faculty and that moral judgments are the product of man's reason, Swift says in his sermon "Upon Sleeping in Church" that it is not the business of the Christian orator to move the passions, but "only to work upon Faith and Reason."[9] And in his "Letter to a Young Clergyman" Swift suggests that the pulpit orator's most effective tool is "A PLAIN convincing Reason," by which he evidently means logical argumentation.[10]

Sharing the conviction that Christianity is a rational faith and seeing the need for a new rhetoric that would effectively expound and defend what Chillingworth terms those "common notions written by God in the hearts of all men," the Cambridge Platonists, the Latitudinarians, and prominent High Churchmen advocated a new stylistic ideal of reasoned discourse.[11] This ideal, Tillotson approximates in his sermons. Some notion of his characteristic pulpit manner, the style of his thought, and the uses to which he puts the rhetoric of the *via media* may be had from the following passage in which Tillotson answers the objection that the laws of Christianity place too great a restraint upon human nature:

> And then as to the other part of the objection—That religion restrains us of our liberty; the contrary is most evidently true, that sin and vice are the greatest slavery. For he is truly a slave, who is not at liberty to follow his own judgment, and to do those things which he is inwardly convinced it is best for him to do; but is subject to the unreasonable commands, and the tyrannical power and violence of his lusts and passions: so that he is not master of himself, but other lords have got dominion over him; and he is perfectly at their beck and command. One vice or passion bids him go, and he goes; another come, and he comes; and a third, do this, and he doth it. The man is at perpetual variance with his own mind. . . .
>
> But the service of God, and the obedience to his laws is perfect liberty: because the law of God requires nothing of us, but what is recommended to us by our own reason, and from the benefit and advantage of doing it; nothing but what is much more for our own interest to do it, than it can be for God's to command it. . . .[12]

The meaning of the passage is conveyed in clear, short sentences. There are no digressions, no convolutions of style, and no two elements are violently yoked together. For conceits, allegories, catalogues of quotations from the Church Fathers, emotional exhortations, the *quid*, the *quale*, and the *quantum*, Tillotson substitutes an opposition of terms, of ideas, and a heavy dependence on abstract nouns. The use of aetiologia, a figure of thought introduced by *for* or *because* which explains or provides a reason for a preceding statement, enables him to weave a tight logical pattern in which one observation proceeds naturally to the next. One has only to compare a characteristic passage from a sermon by Lancelot Andrewes or John Owen to see how radically the new rhetoric differs from the rhetoric of metaphysical and Puritan sermons.

It is not surprising that the structure of the Anglican sermon, as well as its style, should have undergone a drastic change. Anglicans felt that the circuitous route taken by the metaphysical sermon would no longer serve their purpose. Neither would the methodical or schematic structure of the Puritan sermon, with its many divisions and subdivisions, its countless applications and observations. It was believed that the formal structure of the sermon, like its rhetoric, should be consonant with the Anglican appeal to man's reason.

Gilbert Burnet indicates that the prevailing structure of the Anglican sermon had to be totally revamped or completely discarded, if the sermon was to be moral rather than simply literary, logical rather than schematic. Reflecting the influence of John Wilkins' *Ecclesiastes: or, A Discourse Concerning the Gift of Preaching* (1646), Burnet's description of the new sermon structure may be reduced to the following outline: statement and brief explication of the text, examination of several (generally three or four) propositions arising from the text, and an application or conclusion based on these propositions taken together.[13] Thus, the new structure of the Anglican sermon represents a modified version of the structure of the classical oration. Its three divisions—explication, confirmation (including logical proof), application—have their counterpart in the classical exordium, narration, and peroration. Virtually any sermon by South, Tillotson, and Swift will illustrate the structural pattern outlined above from Burnet's description.

With the succession of what is commonly referred to as the Tillotsonian pulpit tradition, the Anglican *via media* succeeded in adopting a simplified sermon structure and a rational rhetoric, consisting largely of logical argumentation, which it used in the service of what it believed to be a rational faith.

II

In 1945 Herbert Davis remarked that Swift's sermons reveal "the full force of all his gifts," and suggested that the "more closely we analyze the few sermons that remain, the more difficult it is to understand why it has been customary to dismiss them casually with a reference to some phrase of Swift in which he disparages his own powers as a preacher."[14] Yet, two decades later, it is still customary to dismiss the sermons as exposition or to disparage them. In his introduction to the sermons for the Davis edition, Louis Landa observes that only modest claims may be made for Swift as a preacher, and that the sermon form "restrained the full, free flow of his genius and gave little opportunity for those qualities for which we value him most."[15]

Behind these conflicting judgments by two distinguished Swiftians are two different approaches to the sermons. Landa's method is clearly historical. His aim is to determine what the sermons tell us about Swift. For instance, he finds the sermon on the "Causes of the Wretched Conditions of Ireland" "of more than passing interest because it reveals Swift's attitude toward the charity-school movement."[16] Although this approach may teach us much about Swift's ideas and attitudes, it tells us little about Swift's art. And it scarcely prepares us for Landa's depreciating judgment. Davis's approach is signaled by the words—*the more closely we analyze*. It encourages us to consider the sermons as the pulpit arguments that they are, to analyze the rhetoric, and then, on the basis of our analysis, to determine whether or not we find in them those qualities for which we value Swift most. Such an approach may find the sermon on the "Conditions of Ireland" to be of considerable interest because of Swift's artistry in the vivid descriptions of the moral and social stagnation that he saw in Ireland at this time, or the persuasive way in which he awakens in his audience a consciousness of their own condition and leads them to accept remedies for their self-improvement. Since Swift consciously wrote his sermons to persuade, it seems only natural that our final judgment of their art should be based upon how well they achieve what they set out to do.

Following the practice of Tillotson, Swift subordinates rhetoric to argument and aims his sermons at man's reason rather than his emotions. Although he uses both ethical and pathetic proof in all the sermons, he depends mainly upon such devices of logical proof as aetiologia, definition, and the enthymeme. The kind of logical progression that we encounter in the sermons is illustrated in the following passage from "On Mutual Subjection," in which Swift argues that every man has a duty to fulfill his particular function in a Christian community for the benefit of all. Two aetiologias, introduced by *because* and *for,* follow and supply reasons for a major premise:

> The Practice of this Duty of being subject to one another, would make us rest contented in the several Stations of Life wherein God hath thought fit to place us; because it would in the best and easiest manner bring us back as it were to that early State of the Gospel when Christians had all things in common. For, if the Poor found the Rich disposed to supply their wants; if the Ignorant found the Wise ready to instruct and direct them; or, if the Weak might always find Protection from the Mighty; they could none of them with the least Pretense of Justice lament their own Condition.[17]

Swift's use of the enthymeme or abbreviated syllogism is illustrated by the following passage from the same sermon:

> Neither is any Condition of Life more honourable in the Sight of God than another; otherwise he would be a Respector of Persons, which he assureth us he is not.[18]

What strikes us at first as a dogmatic pronouncement ("Neither is any Condition of Life more honourable in the Sight of God than another") becomes the logical conclusion of a syllogism that reads: (1) God assures us that he is not a respector of persons; (2) If God considered one condition of life more honorable than another, he would be a respector of persons; (3) God does not consider any condition of life more honorable than another. Swift strengthens his conclusion with more logical proof in the form of this aetiologia: "For he hath proposed the same Salvation to all Men, and hath only placed them in different Ways or Stations to work it out."[19]

Governing much of Swift's logical proof is a two-valued orientation that derives from his practice of opposing values that the great majority of men believe to be just and sound with others that are false or unjust or impractical. To insure acceptance of the moral position he is either advocating or defending and rejection of all opposing values, Swift naturally identifies his own position with the "right" set of values. Assuming various rhetorical forms, this two-valued orientation underlies Swift's attempt to prove that the wisdom and virtue of unrevealed philosophy fall short of Christian wisdom and virtue, that the advantages of a life of poverty outweigh whatever advantages attend a life of wealth and power, and that moral honesty is an inadequate substitute for a religious conscience.

Swift often uses definition and redefinition to create this opposition of values, this either-or orientation. In the case of redefinition a single thing is defined twice. One definition presenting the acceptable set of values is explicitly and directly opposed by another presenting a false set. For example, in the sermon "On Brotherly Love" a moderate man is defined and then redefined in order to create two opposing standards, one of which Swift's audience will consider moral and acceptable, the other immoral and unacceptable. In the case of definition only one set of values is made explicit; the other, most often the "right" set, is merely implied. Thus, by demolishing what he believes to be a false standard, Swift implies adherence to the one which opposes it. For instance, without explicitly opposing the concept of honor with that of a religious conscience, Swift implies the superiority of the latter in the following definition of honor:

> (1) This Word is often made the Sanction of an Oath; it is reckoned a great Commendation to be a Man of strict Honour; and it is commonly understood, that a Man of Honour can never be guilty of a
> (2) base Action. This is usually the Stile of Military Men; of Persons with Titles; and of others who pretend to Birth and Quality.

> (3) It is true indeed, that in ancient Times it was universally under-
> stood, that Honour was the Reward of Virtue; but if such Honour
> as is now-a-days going will not permit a Man to do a base Action,
> it must be allowed, there are very few such Things as base Actions
> (4) in Nature. No Man of Honour, as that word is usually understood,
> did ever pretend that his Honour obliged him to be chaste or tem-
> perate; to pay his Creditors; to be useful to his Country; to do
> good to Mankind; to endeavor to be wise or learned; to regard his
> (5) Word, his Promise, or his Oath; or if he hath any of these Virtues,
> they were never learned in the Catechism; which contains but
> two Precepts, the punctual Payment of Debts contracted at Play,
> and the right understanding the several Degrees of an Affront, in
> order to revenge it by the Death of an Adversary.[20]

A flawlessly conceived and perfectly executed example of reduction, Swift's definition of honor illustrates how he uses the logical argumentation of his negative persuasion to imply acceptance of the moral position he is advocating. Each step of the definition constitutes a step in a climactic progression and a further heightening in the reductive pattern. The first sentence consists of objective reporting or strict exposition: this is what is thought of honor today. The reductive pattern begins with the last part of the second sentence and the words, "others who pretend." In the third Swift concedes a point, but only to win a greater one. Honor as it was understood in ancient times is drawn in only so that honor "as is now-a-days going" may be contrasted unfavorably with it. The reduction is well under way. With the fourth sentence accumulation composed of six parts, the concept of honor is rendered meaningless. Of what use is honor, Swift suggests, if it does not oblige man to do all these important things? Not content to leave the concept a hollow word, Swift—by stating its two basic precepts—reduces it utterly in a brilliant climax.

It is with logical argumentation and negative persuasion of this kind that the sermons rise to the level of art. Admitting them to be deficient in eloquence (a charge that would have delighted Swift), Sir Walter Scott observes that the sermons "exhibit, in an eminent degree, that powerful grasp of intellect which distinguishes the author above all his contemporaries . . . The reasoning is not only irresistable, but managed in a mode so simple and clear that its force is obvious to the most ordinary capacity."[21] It is not plainness but this quality of forcible reasoning that best characterizes Swift's sermons and the rhetoric of the seventeenth century Anglican *via media*.

NOTES

1. Among the many excellent studies of this subject, the following have been particularly influential: R. F. Jones, "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XLV (1930), 977-1009 and "The Attack on Pulpit Eloquence in the Restoration," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XXX (1931), 188-217; W. Fraser Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson* (Lon-

don, 1932) O.P.; George Williamson, "The Restoration Revolt against Enthusiasm," *Studies in Philology*, XXX (1933), 571-603.

2. A noteworthy revaluation of "The Plain Style" is undertaken by Martin Price in Chapter II of *Swift's Rhetorical Art* (New Haven, 1953) O.P. How much I am indebted to Price's excellent account is clearly apparent throughout my essay.

3. *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939–in progress), I, 250. All quotations from Swift's prose are taken from this edition.

4. In *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1934), pp. 80-81, Louis Bredvold observes: "In England, as well as on the Continent, the problem of the authority of the reason in religion was early recognized as fundamental. Circumstanced as the Anglican Church was, the development of its theology in the direction of rationalism was natural and necessary."

5. For a thorough account of the Anglican position on reason and religion, see Phillip Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of "A Tale of a Tub"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

6. Francis Atterbury, *Sermons and Discourses on Several Subjects and Occasions* (London, 1737), IV, 11-12, O.P.

7. Robert South, *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions* (London, 1877), I, 368, O.P.

8. Ricardo Quintana was the first to suggest that Swift was a rationalist in religion. See *Swift: An Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 33-38. Also, see Harth, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

9. Davis, *op. cit.*, IX, 214.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

11. William Chillingworth, *Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1838), I, 14-15; quoted in Bredvold, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

12. John Tillotson, Sermon XXVIII, *The Works* (London, 1820), II, 489-90, O.P.

13. Gilbert Burnet, *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care* (3rd ed.; London, 1713), p. 193, O.P.

14. James L. Clifford (ed.), "The Conciseness of Swift," *Eighteenth-Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism* (New York: Peter Smith, Publisher, 1959), p. 90.

15. Davis, *op. cit.*, IX, 101. Twelve of Swift's sermons survive, although the authorship of one, "The Difficulty of Knowing One's Self," has been questioned by Landa and Davis.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 129. Similarly, Landa comments on "Doing Good:" "Whatever interest attaches to the sermon rises out of the spectacle of Swift's taking this burning controversial issue into the pulpit." *Ibid.*, p. 128.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, p. 153. The steps in the reductive pattern are noted in parentheses.

21. Quoted in Temple Scott (ed.), *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift* (London, 1897-1908), IV, 110, O.P.

Teaching the Rhetorical Approach to the Poem

Sam Meyer

If rhetoric characteristically consists, as has been said, in adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas, then we might well begin our teaching of poetry by clarifying in our own minds what our role should be in bringing our students into meaningful–and therefore pleasurable–contact with products of the poetic art. And maybe the initial point of emphasis that we should make, first for ourselves and later for our charges, is that we are not going to deal with poetry at all–*only with poems*; that is, with definite compositions which were created by specific practitioners of the art in an attempt, we may suppose, to communicate something to someone for a purpose. This avowed concentration upon the individual work has an important advantage from the standpoint of both teacher and student. For the former, it removes the presumed requirement to pronounce absolutes regarding poetry in the abstract. For the latter, it fosters a notion concerning the uniqueness of each poem and hence engenders an expectation about a unique experience to be enjoyed.

From clarification and simplification of the task, the teacher goes on to seek a way to structure the student's experience of entering into a poem. This he tries to do without restrictively previsioning or otherwise unduly circumscribing that experience. Once the student has come into contact with a given poem, the teacher ought to refrain from doing anything that will tend to break the spell between writer and reader. Above all, the teacher does well to avoid creating an habitual expectation on the part of class members that if they are only patient enough, the teacher will eventually "explain what it's all about." The teacher, must, indeed, stubbornly resist the strong temptation to "tie it all up in a neat package" so that the student may conveniently take it away with him. If the teacher yields to this temptation, the poem will become "like a patient etherized upon a table," with the implication to the student that there is nothing more to be done with it. The ideal should be, not for the teacher to prepare the poem as a collector's item, but so to deal with it that the poem remains alive for the student because its possibilities for him are well-nigh inexhaustible.

How can the teacher best function so as to help the student realize the poem for himself at a present reading and still maintain an open-end relationship toward it for future readings? I believe that one of the ways he can most effectively accomplish this objective is by inviting the student to take a rhetorical approach to it and by assisting the student to explore the potentialities of this approach in relation to each poem encountered. The rhetorical approach that I refer to is one that is implicit in Aristotle's concept of a communicative situation as involving the interaction of three elements—speaker (poet as projected), subject matter (the poem), and the audience (student as listener or reader in an attitude suggested by the poem).

Later I want to examine briefly the implications of the approach in a few illustrative situations. But first I ought to respond to an objection which some of you are sure to raise at this point. You will say that I am suggesting that the professor have the student react to a poem in the light of compositional principles which were promulgated for prose. Certainly Aristotle conceived a difference between rhetoric and poetic. The movement of the former he saw as primarily intellectual, a progress from one thought to another, determined by logical considerations. The movement of poetic discourse—epic, dramatic, and lyric poems—he saw as primarily imaginative, a progress from image to image, determined by emotional considerations. Yet in the *Poetics* Aristotle conceded that style is in essence the same in prose and in verse. This view is echoed by Sir Philip Sidney in *An Apologie for Poetrie*, when he excused himself for straying from poetry to oratory on the grounds that "both have such an affinity in this wordish consideration." Besides conceding the contact of prose and poetry in diction, Aristotle carried rhetoric bodily over into poetic by including *dianoia*, or thought, as third in importance among the elements of tragedy, which in ancient Greece was exclusively a poetic kind. The point here is not to demonstrate that Aristotle was inconsistent, nor even to ascribe merit to the acceptance of narrowly rhetorical conceptions of poetry on the part of many poets and critics of the Renaissance. Rather, it is to emphasize that poetry, by its very nature as communication through the medium of language, cannot escape from considerations on the part of the reader about who the implied speaker is, what he is speaking about, and what means he is employing to reach his audience. The significant thing for the teacher to keep in mind, it seems to me, is that a student's problem of establishing these rhetorical orientations is likely to vary in difficulty from poem to poem, depending to some extent on its relative proportion of direct and parabolic expression. In this connection, it is also important for the teacher to avoid adopting too narrow a view of what poetry is. He should recognize frankly—and make this recognition a factor in his teaching—that any given poem will take its place somewhere along a continuum from virtually prosaic statement to the highest reaches of imaginative utterance.

I am simply suggesting here that the professor refrain from imposing upon his students, either directly or by inference, a hierarchy of poetic values. Surely, the most helpful thing the teacher can do is to make his students sensitive to the different ways in which poems get their effects and to invite them to look into the possibility that at least some of these different effects have to do with the opposition, or blending, of statement and suggestion in the poem. Would it not represent a gain for the student to discover that, for example, Whitman's "Song of the Answerer" is amenable to analysis along logical lines and to conclude, as a consequence, that this poem tends to be more discursive than imagistic? Or would it not be instructive for young adults to work out for themselves the way in which realistic description and a simple story line in Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum" are modulated throughout by emotional and stylistic ordering? Or to come to see how in Tennyson's "Tithonus" a relatively simple theme has been elaborated by dramatic representation and by rhythm, sound, and imagery into a tone poem of singularly moving quality? Or to begin to perceive the limits of narrative or logical continuity when they try to find the focus—theme or emotional quality—of a witty poem like, say, Wallace Stevens' "Anecdote of the Jar"?

Even the passing notice I have just made to a handful of familiar pieces is perhaps sufficient to suggest the variety of modes which the youthful student is likely to encounter when, under his mentor's hopefully light-handed guidance, he begins to read poems earnestly. It will be fruitful, I think, for the teacher of college English to remember for himself, and then to act accordingly in relation to his young scholars, that irrespective of their modes, whether the poems be relatively prosy and circumstantial like Holmes' "Old Ironsides" or highly expressionist like Eliot's "The Hollow Men," rhetoric in the broad Aristotelian-Ciceronian sense applies to them.

The concept of poetry as a form of rhetoric carries with it the implication that all poets are bound by the rhetorical imperatives. These can be summed up for our purpose here in the dictum that the communication be appropriate to the writer, to the recipient, and to the circumstances of communication. This is a comforting dictum for the teacher of poems. But I would be less than candid if I did not acknowledge that, in the eyes of many qualified observers, much modern poetry, with its private myths, dream structures, seven or more types of ambiguity, and seeming disorganization, does not conform to it. While the causes for the dissociative tendency of contemporary poetry in the large lies beyond the modest aims of this presentation, it certainly can be said, in negative terms, that such poetry reflects the relative unavailability for communication of most of the traditional values, modes, and frames of reference which were so useful in the past, particularly at the time of the Renaissance, for bridging the gap between poet and audience. Among these conventional means of facilitating and controlling interchange may be mentioned classical myth, Biblical allusions, religious symbolism, the huge arsenal of conventionalized figures of rhetoric, the three styles, the special genres, and the positions and places of rhetoric. That this loss of the "common store" has materially increased the difficulty of teaching poems written in this century is undeniable. Yet amidst the anfractuosities of even the most *outré* of poems in the latest university literary quarterlies, some perceiving intelligence must still tell and show; in every modern poem, even though seemingly cut adrift from the moorings of time, place, and circumstance and floating on a sea of "pure emotion," a subject must still be present; and today's poet still writes for an audience, even though he may conceive it as "the few that only lend their ears," of whom Samuel Daniel speaks in *Musophilus*. In this connection, we have only to recall how, among major poets of the present century, Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens have labored arduously to provide in different ways a background which will make their poems more intelligible. Thus the fact of rhetorical grounding for the poem, whatever the period, is not seriously in question. What is in question is the appropriateness of the means which contemporary poets are exploiting in an attempt to reach the human intelligence when it is functioning at its greatest intensity and perception.

The concept of a poem as a rhetorical phenomenon would seem to remain, then, universally valid. In an attempt to get his students accustomed to employing this concept as a means of getting at a poem, a teacher obviously needs to develop practices and procedures consonant with it. What questions should he ask to stimulate response to a poem? What information should he volunteer? How should he moderate discussion of it? What should he require the students to do in and outside of class? These are immensely practical problems. Perhaps the most useful gauge he can have for working them out is a clear notion in his own mind of precisely what assumptions about poets and poems the concept commits him to. It may therefore be worthwhile to be as specific as possible about these assumptions.

One of the assumptions that the teacher must accept is the simple fact that a poem begins with the poet. Some subjective experience of sensation, emotion, or thought—or a complex of such experience—gives him the "nudge," as Paul Engle once phrased it, to start on a poem. Seeing an ant and a moth on a table, watching leaves drifting down one by one, thinking about his children leaving home and going out into the world, reading "The Ancient Mariner" in high school—these are a few actual experiences which poets have testified to be the germ of their compositions. Regardless of the original impulse which sets a poem in motion, the poet's task from then on is to apprehend his raw experience—somehow to clarify it, even if the result is, in Frost's words, only a "momentary stay against confusion."

The teacher who accepts the conception of a poem as rhetoric must further assume that this process on the poet's part of objectifying and ordering his materials, which results in the finished product, is motivated by the poet's desire, whether consciously acknowledged or not, to communicate his new-found vision to others. What is his must become theirs. The finished product, in its elaboration of subject, form, and language, is the resultant of the poet's adaptation of his materials to an audience. According to this view, when the poet lays down his pen, the task of communication is only half done. The response of the reader is essential to round out the communication, to complete the circuit. Whitman's enunciation of the creative role of the reader, as expressed in *November Boughs,* deserves to be recalled in this connection:

> "The reader will always have his or her part to do, just as much as I have had mine. I seek . . . to bring you, reader, into the atmosphere of the theme or thought—there to pursue your own flight."

The inference that a poet is writing for someone, a point briefly alluded to in my commentary regarding the difficulty of modern poetry, needs to be glanced at in somewhat more detail inasmuch as it is a key supposition in the concept of a poem as rhetoric. If the poet is not actually writing with any audience in view, he might as well be composing in Choctaw as in English! In any event, without an audience in mind, however vaguely defined, he would be engaging in little more than a solipsistic exercise which, if it ever came to light at all, could hardly be more than a curiosity. We need not take Shelley at his literal word, when he romantically described the poet as a "nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds." John Stuart Mill was perhaps closer to the truth of the actual situation, when he suggested in *Poetry and Its Varieties* that since poetry is the "natural fruit of solitude," it is *overheard* while eloquence is *heard.* Indeed, many modern studies, like M. R. Ridley's *Keats' Craftsmanship: A Study in Poetic Development* (revealing in detail the laborious revisions in the manuscripts of Keats' poems), would seem to indicate that poets in general put themselves to a tolerable heap of trouble just to be overheard!

There can hardly be many poets like Whitman's bashful brown thrush in the famous elegy, which sang by itself in the swamp the song of the bleeding heart. Today's critics would doubtless comment that even if anyone were present to hear the song, it would be meaningless unless the expression of the naturalistic emotions were "distanced"—that is, transformed from material passion into formal emotion through an ordering process. Of course, as you will recall, in the poem itself the poet-speaker eventually makes the bird's wordless outpouring of grief apprehensible to the reader by converting it into the tallying song of his soul, the memorable carol of death beginning, "Come lovely and soothing death. . . ." From a voiceless cry of a gray-brown bird in deep, secluded recesses, the song becomes a public performance, "covering the earth and filling the spread of the heavens." Perhaps we, too, teacher and student alike, ought to accustom ourselves to think of a poem as destined for "public performance." Certainly, when we read accounts by poets themselves—and I am thinking at the moment of an especially perceptive and revealing one by Melville Cane, titled *Making a Poem: An Inquiry into the Creative Process*—we are struck by the care and attention lavished by the makers of poems upon the hypothetical reader, so that their truth may be embraced by others. What Ben Jonson said in *Timber* of Virgil, that he brought forth his verses like a bear, and after formed them with licking, appears to be typical of most poets about whom we know a great deal. Accordingly, when we accept as a cornerstone of the rhetorical approach the assumption that the poet is striving to reach someone else, we are proceeding on firm ground.

The correlary of this assumption has already been intimated—that the poem on the printed page represents in its totality the externalization of the poet's inner experience of sense, sensation, and sensibility in the form and manner calculated by him as best adapted to communicate these states to the reader. The precise artistic form which the experience ultimately takes evolves from an almost endless series of choices on the poet's part. If he has done his work well, each one of these choices—and they extend to the minutest detail—has a part to play in helping the reader to respond appropriately. It therefore follows that fostering the habit of close and attentive reading on the part of students, who are sometimes understandably reluctant to subject themselves to this rigorous discipline, ranks high as a desideratum for teachers of poems. If, as legend has it, Oscar Wilde spent a morning putting in a comma and an afternoon taking it out, he must have thought its presence or absence momentous for the reader. If Housman employs a feminine rhyme in the *a*-line and a masculine rhyme in the *b*-line of his cross-rhymed quatrain in "With Rue My Heart Is Laden," the teacher would do well to accustom students to observe such details and to register the nuances they convey.

Among the choices, major and minor, which eventuate in a poem, those having to do with the revealed and implied character of the teller or speaker (his identity and way of taking himself) and with his point of view (his way of taking the subject) are basic to the effect of the poem upon the reader. These phenomena are factors of voice and address, tone and attitude, which are capable of almost infinite variations. Their cardinal importance is indicated by their correspondence to Aristotle's fundamental concepts of *ethos,* the character and moral potential of the speaker, to which he mainly devotes the first of his three books in the *Rhetoric*; and of *pathé,* the generalized emotions of all human beings, to which he devotes most of the second. (The final book deals with the coming together in the speech itself of the speaker and audience.) Sensitizing students to these value positions which go to the heart of a poem can be one of the most fructifying tasks which the teacher can perform for student readers. Through this avenue, it is virtually certain that the student can get some sense of the deep involvement which a poet brings to his creation. The teacher assists the student in responding by posing evocative questions. Even for poems which have been almost anthologized out of meaningful existence, questions bearing on the rhetorical aspects can often open up fresh vistas.

Thus, let us take Emerson's "Concord Hymn, Sung at the Completion of the Battle Monument, July 4, 1837." In view of the rich historic associations constantly brought before us by the site chosen for this

Convention, it is rather fitting that we do so. Indeed, just seventeen miles northwest of Boston stands the famous monument to "The Minute Man," executed by Daniel French and dedicated at elaborate ceremonies on April 19, 1875. On the face of the native Massachusetts granite pedestal is graven in bronze capitals the opening stanza of the "Concord Hymn," which Emerson had composed for the dedication of another memorial on a day some thirty-eight years earlier. Emerson himself was not present on that day. The "Hymn" was sung to the tune of "Old Hundred," familiar to us in the form of the metrical doxology.

Somewhere in the context of the total engagement of the class with "Concord Hymn," the teacher might want to raise, among others, questions like the following, which bear on the rhetorical orientation: Does the speaker identify himself as taking part in the ceremonies? Does he indicate his relationship in time with the heroes of the battle of April 19, 1775, at the Old North Bridge? Does he indicate his sympathies for either side in the struggle? Does he seem to harbor resentment against the "foe," who were responsible for killing two minutemen and wounding four others? If the speaker identifies himself with the citizens taking part in the dedication of the granite obelisk, does he ever separate himself from them?

Robert Frost once expressed the view that not even Thermopylae, where a small band of Greeks held the pass against a vastly superior Persian horde, has been celebrated better than the Battle of Concord in "Concord Hymn." Besides the renowned elegy by Simonides in *The Greek Anthology,* which Frost likely had in mind when he made this remark, Thermopylae was extensively treated in orations of the panegyric type. In this classical genre, the speaker commemorates the significance of a present occasion. Is concentration on the present paramount in "Concord Hymn"? What is the speaker's attitude toward time? How does it compare with that of Lincoln in "The Gettysburg Address"?

What seems to be the rhetorical mode—dramatic, hortatory, ritualistic? What is the rhetorical level—colloquial, formal, or something else?

Does assigning the title "Concord Hymn" require the poet to have a perspective different from the one needed to project the *persona* who speaks in the poem?

Who seems to be the speaker's immediate audience? Is there a removed or fictive audience as well? Is the address to the spirit at the end really a "turning aside," in the literal meaning of the word *apostrophe?*

Does the speaker appear to be proclaiming a received doctrine? Does the fact that the poem is highly topical—firmly anchored to a point in time—militate against its lasting quality?

By means of questions such as these, directed to exploring the relations of the poet to his subject, the teacher, with an emotional warmth no less real for being, if you please, "properly distanced," may usher each student into the intensely subjective world of the poem, whose subjectivity the poet has made communicable through the elaboration of art, in normative patterns of words and sounds. Inside this felt world of the poet's creation, the student will seek his own relations—his own stance. From a vantage point of his own finding, the student will, it is hoped, share the poet's own experience of realizing—in Frost's words again—"the glad recognition of the long lost." He will in the process sensitize himself to "see things feelingly," as blind Gloucester on the heath assured King Lear he did, and learn to know things as they really are, frequently through suggestions of what they are like.

In this private world which the student intuits because the poet has made it open to him, the student will, it is devoutly to be wished, hear, along with the poet, the lulling sound of a trickling stream, from high rock tumbling down; drink into his eyes the shine of every slanting silver line; fall upon the thorns of life and bleed; and think a green thought in a green shade. Once acclimatized to the poem's way of telling, showing, dramatizing, he will begin to apprehend things in their true relations.

In closing, I recall a story that Ray Bradbury once wrote which was based on the idea that everything that has been spoken in the world still exists as vibrations in space. The main character invents a machine which, by locating the proper wave length, enables him to "receive" any significant utterance of history. Perhaps the rhetorical approach to the poem which I have briefly sketched here can serve as a machine which the teacher of undergraduates can actually construct in the classroom. Properly adjusted to eliminate static, it may permit the student to tune in on the words of poems which also go echoing down the years.

Rhetorical Analysis and Poetic Structure

Robert M. Browne

The current revival of interest in rhetorical studies has brought with it an interest in the possible application of rhetoric to the analysis of literary works. In this paper I shall make rhetorical analyses of three poems, with the hope of showing that rhetorical analysis is an essential part of an analysis of poetic structure. Though for the sake of convenience my samples are drawn from what is commonly called lyrical poetry, my argument in favor of rhetorical analysis extends to narrative and drama as well, and terms like *poem* and *poetic* should be understood in their most extended sense.

The relations between poetry and rhetoric have been uneasy since the beginning of the Romantic period, when poets and critics first felt the necessity of severing poetry from rhetoric in order to save it from assimilation. Many people now feel it is time to reestablish cordial relations between rhetoric and poetic. This is a promising development, but I am not sure that we are all agreed on what a proper relationship would be. To cite only one problem, will the revival of rhetoric in literary studies mean the ascendancy of rhetoric over poetic? I would be reluctant to abandon the principle on which modern criticism has so much insisted, that poetic and rhetoric are distinct disciplines. The rehabilitation of rhetoric is gained at too great a price if it once more authorizes critics to treat poems primarily in terms of rhetoric.

Disagreement over basic theory is further compounded by that fact that we are not even agreed about terms; one man's rhetoric is another man's poetic. The term *rhetoric* is particularly slippery; I suggest that people have at least three things in mind when they use this term in connection with poems. First and most generally, they may be thinking of those aspects of the poem by which it is an element in a social process: the process whereby the minds of writers and readers meet each other in a poem. To help this meeting to take place, says Wayne Booth, the writer "does what he can to make himself readable," finds "techniques of expression which will make the work accessible in the highest possible degree." Consequently everything in a work may be considered rhetorical, even character and event, if "it is dictated by the effort to help the reader grasp the work."[1] So employed, *rhetoric* means accessibility to readers.

A second use of the term *rhetoric* is more traditional. Rhetoric may mean the poem's participation in a persuasive process, a process whereby a poet persuades his audience of the truth of a thesis or the desirability of some action. As rhetoric, the poem is instrumental to the poet's extrapoetic purposes. I do not believe that all poems exhibit such extrapoetic intentions, but some certainly do. To analyze Milton's "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont" as propaganda against the Catholic Church is legitimate, and it is rhetorical analysis, but it is analysis of the poem as rhetoric and not as poem. Such analysis only becomes illegitimate when it is presented as the proper way to analyze poems. When this happens, rhetorical analysis becomes a substitute for poetic analysis rather than an alternative to it.

The rhetoric which derives from the poet's extrapoetic intention may be called *external* rhetoric, external because both poet and readers are outside the poem. But rhetoric enters the poem in a third and more intrinsic way; inside the poem there are speakers and hearers and processes of persuasion. We sometimes use the term *rhetoric* to apply to this *internal* rhetoric of the poem, and consider its speakers as rhetoricians.

In this paper I shall not be concerned with the accessibility of the work, which I would hesitate to call its *rhetoric* in any case. Nor will I concern myself with external rhetoric. Only the internal rhetoric of the poem seems to me of direct interest to the student of poetic structure, and I will concentrate on the usefulness of analyzing it.[2] I do not wish to make exaggerated claims for rhetorical analysis; rhetorical structure is only a part of poetic structure, and rhetorical analysis must be complemented by grammatical and poetic analysis. Furthermore, rhetorical structure is much more conspicuous in some poems than in others; not all rhetorical analysis will lead to important results. Nevertheless, all speech has rhetorical structure inasmuch as it is directed toward a hearer for some purpose, even when the speech is soliloquy or the purpose is obscure. A complete analysis of poetic structure will have to take it into account. In some works, naturalistic novels for instance, the very inconspicuousness of rhetorical structure has an aesthetic effect.

The kind of poetry which best exhibits rhetorical structure is the expository poem, and I wish to illustrate how rhetorical analysis operates by examining three expository or partly expository poems. My rhetorical terminology comes largely from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

Let us begin with Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet, "With How Sad Steps, O Moon."

> With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies,
> How silently, and with how wan a face!
> What! may it be that even in heav'nly place
> That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
> Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
> Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case.
> I read it in thy looks; thy languisht grace
> To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.

Then, ev'n of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be lov'd, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

Rhetorical analysis normally begins with consideration of *dianoia* or thought, the basic arguments in the work. In a more modern poem the speaker might very well either describe the moonlit scene or get on to meditating about his own situation. Instead, the speaker of Sidney's poem personifies the moon, addresses it, and engages it in a kind of witty argument. The description of the moon in lines 1 and 2 is there as evidence for the conclusion which the speaker leaps to in lines 3 and 4, that the moon is love-sick.

The implied reasoning of these lines is that of the enthymeme, the rhetorical syllogism. In this one a premise has been suppressed: Creatures who exhibit a certain kind of behavior are usually love-sick. The minor premise, that the moon exhibits such behavior, appears in lines 1-2, the conclusion in 3-4. It is hardly watertight logic—rhetorical argument rarely is—and the speaker protects himself in two ways. First, he puts the conclusion as a question, not as a statement. Secondly, he has recourse to Aristotle's "ethical" argument in lines 5-8. The ethical argument presents evidence of the reliability of the speaker. The argument here is that the judgment of the speaker can be trusted because he has experience in the area under discussion. Even this is put conditionally: "Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes/ Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case." But this restraint, like the use of the question form in lines 3-4, is only a further part of the speaker's ethical argument: it illustrates his modesty and is not to be taken as seriously weakening his argument.

So far, the speaker seems intent on proving to the moon that she is love-sick. To what end? Hardly to convince the moon of her own condition; for the moon must know the truth better than the speaker. The words "ev'n of fellowship" in line 9 give the clue: the speaker is anxious to convince the moon that the two of them are united by their common experience and should help each other. The logical and ethical arguments I have just described are subordinate to what Aristotle calls the "pathetic" argument: "putting the audience in the right frame of mind." In turn, as we also learn from line 9 ("tell me"), the purpose of this hierarchy of arguments is simply to prevail upon the moon to answer questions about love in the sphere of the moon. Rhetorically considered, the speaker's purpose would be classified in Aristotelian terms as "deliberative," rather than forensic or epideictic. He wishes to move his hearer to an action in the future, to persuade the moon to answer the four questions with which the poem closes.

I have been analyzing the rhetoric of the speaker from a literal point of view, a point of view which may seem ludicrously beside the point.

For it is obvious that the apparent address of the poem cannot be the real one. No one in real life addresses an inanimate object with such rhetorical art. Since the literal rhetorical situation is impossible, the analysis must be pursued on the level of trope. Who is the *real* audience of the speaker? What is his real purpose, if it is not deliberative rhetoric.

Here we reexamine the speech from another point of view. If such elaborate rhetoric had really been intended to persuade the moon, the speech ends a bit anticlimactically; there is no reference to the deliberative purpose after line 9. Even if the situation had been one in which literal persuasion had been conceivable, it would look a bit queer that the final third of the poem, lines 10-14, should escape from the control of the elaborate rhetorical machinery set up in lines 1-9. This extended passage therefore bears closer examination.

In the four questions five adverbs are used prominently to stress the contrast between the lunar and the earthly sphere. Though four of these adverbs refer to the moon rather than the earth, the speaker is not really as interested in the moon as the form of his questions might indicate. On the contrary, the very repetition of "there" reveals that he is really preoccupied by "here." The realm of earthly love is one about which literal statements can in fact be made; the fanciful questions about the moon have sense if they are implied statements about the earth.

As statements about the earth they are, moreover, not just philosophical remarks by a detached observer about the earthly love game. The lines themselves suggest a condemnation of the game. Furthermore, the lines of the octave which previously seemed part of the speaker's ethical argument now have another sense; they provide information which indicates that the speaker is a victim, not just an observer of earthly love. If he has any rhetorical purpose on the level of trope, it would have to be classified as forensic or epideictic: either to convict earthly mistresses of injustice (forensic), or simply to dispraise them (epideictic).[3]

Whereas the addressee of the literal level had been the moon, the addressee of the tropical level is indefinite; no doubt it includes the proud beauties of the world, including the one who, in the Petrarchan convention of this poem, is most responsible for the speaker's discontent. The two levels have different audiences as they have different purposes.

Turning to the style (*lexis*) of this artful speaker, we note that the style of the octave is appropriate to a rather private situation, a situation involving a single addressee. The opening exclamations and rhetorical question, and such colloquialisms as "What!" and "Sure" are suited to a rhetoric one addresses to an equal. The same characteristic is carried out in other elements. The typical sentence is a unit of two lines, and thus does not markedly coincide with the unit of rhythm, the line, or the unit of rhyme scheme, the quatrain. Such avoidance of extreme regularity strengthens the sense of an informal, familiar manner. So too, parenthetical interruptions in the first nine lines loosen the syntax and make it more informal. But in the sestet there is more formality as well as a more heightened tone. Most line endings are sentence endings, and the rapidity of the questions indicate more concern on the part of the speaker. This is natural enough, since the center of his interest lies here, at the point where the fiction of address to the moon becomes most transparent.

This examination of the style indicates that it is suitable to the rhetorical purpose of the speaker, but not that it is particularly conspicuous in itself. There are no remarkable tropes and only two unusual constructions: "long-with-love-acquainted eyes" and the inverted order of complements in the last line. In this poem style chiefly supports argument, but the intricate argument is an essential part of the poetic structure.

The two types of argument, the literal and the tropical, develop alongside each other in a way that is not predictable at any one point, but is in retrospect right. As the octave develops, it appears that the tone is light and fanciful: there is a mild joke implied in any one being so politely painstaking to prove so fantastic a case. Sound-structure matches meaning structure: the first quatrain gives the logical argument, the second the ethical argument. But when the real purpose emerges in the sestet, a new side of the speaker's character becomes evident. He is not a fantasist but an ironist, expressing a complaint about human love in the guise of innocent-seeming questions about the moon. Just as there is traditional two-part structure in the sound of this sonnet, and the traditional fresh start in the grammatical structure at line 9, so there is a two part structure in the rhetoric, as I have indicated, the apparent rhetorical function dominating the first 9 lines, and the real one emerging in the last 5.

This analysis by no means accounts for all of the poetic structure; to do so I would have to deal with matters outside the scope of this paper, such as meter. But it serves to indicate, I hope, the important role rhetorical structure can play in the total structure of a poem.

One of the virtues of rhetorical analysis, as I see it, is that it permits one to make some precise observations about poems which are not characterized by brilliant metaphor, symbolism, or irony, poems more or less in the plain style admired by Yvor Winters. Such is another Sidney sonnet, "Leave Me, O Love." The poem resists analysis by the prevailing modes of criticism; it is the kind of eloquent statement which is too frequently judged only in terms of moral or religious value.

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;

Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light,
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
O, take fast hold! let that light be thy guide.
In this small course which birth draws out to death—
And think how evil becometh him to slide,
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

In this poem shifts of address mark the progress of the little action portrayed in the poem. Line 1 addresses the moral choice which the speaker is rejecting, earthly love. But Love cannot really leave the speaker; he must leave Love. Lines 2-12 turn to address the speaker's own mind, the faculty of choice. The choice has been made in principle, but the action is difficult and the motivation must be actively present in the mind. Lines 2-12 constitute a process of deliberative rhetoric, the rhetoric of self-motivation. Lines 13-14, each with a different addressee, reveal that the rhetoric has been successful; instead of the relatively passive request of line 1, we have the firm farewell of line 13 with its justification contained in the second half of the line. Line 14 addresses humbly but directly the God whose goodness has been referred to obliquely throughout.

The little drama of moral choice has been completed. If it has not seemed a very intense drama by comparison with the kind of thing which goes on in a poem of Donne or Hopkins, that is because the two sides of the speaker's mind are not so violently opposed to each other. The speaker's mind needs to be encouraged, not conquered. Hence striking tropes or schemes would be as much out of place as highly conspicuous ethical, pathetic, or logical argument. There are enthymemes implicit in the rhetoric, but the premises are generally buried in relative clauses: "which reachest but to dust," "which never taketh rust," "where lasting freedoms be," etc.

On the side of style there is a noticeably greater formality here than in "With How Sad Steps, O Moon." There are no colloquialisms, rhetorical questions, or strong exclamations; end-stopping is more frequent, and the syntax is more tightly organized. Formality of style in a soliloquy runs counter to modern expectations; since Browning we have expected soliloquy to be familiar. But the devices of personification and apostrophe operate here to permit a certain distance between the speaker and his "mind." Furthermore, the poem operates within a convention (soon to be violated by Donne) of using a relatively formal style for serious moral and religious themes.

The most striking fact about the language of this poem is the abundance of relative clauses, which are so frequent as to constitute a kind of scheme. I have noted that these sometimes present an enthymematic premise; but they also frequently represent the figure of periphrasis. Periphrasis is hardly a very popular figure with modern critics; we are too conscious of its possible abuse. In this poem periphrasis begins with the extremely general phrase "higher things." Though this suggests heaven above by contrast with dust below, its imagistic quality is not strong; it rather indicates a certain reserve in the speaker. This reserve is further illustrated in the New Testament echoes of lines 3 and 6. The echoes place "higher things" in a Christian frame of reference, but their obliqueness is part of the periphrastic mode. Further periphrasis in the form of relative clauses is very prominent in lines 6-12.

I suggest that the frequent periphrasis serves the internal rhetoric of the poem. The speaker needs chiefly to remind himself of his best motives, not to flourish them. He indicates his respect for "higher things" by naming them obliquely throughout his argument. The concluding couplet is somewhat more direct in manner, because he is no longer addressing himself: the syntactical structures become short and paratactic; lengthier periphrases are replaced by the very brief "thy uttermost." The last line addresses the source of "higher things" with a title matching that of line 1 and specifies what the higher things mean: sharing the life of the Godhead. Indirectness is not necessary in talking to God.

Periphrasis is not necessarily wordiness. This periphrasis gives the opposite impression, of compression of meaning, because the things referred to indirectly are great Christian mysteries about which much more could be said. The effect is strengthened by other tropes, such as paradox (3, 5-6, 8); word repetition (4, 12); and compounding of predicates (5, 7, 8, 12). Almost every line is thus figured; the result is not only a speech more interesting for its own sake, but the further revelation of the speaker: a man who has thought this position through.

No rhetorical device that I have mentioned in this analysis transcends the realm of rhetoric proper, yet the poem is not thereby reduced to rhetoric. For one thing, the rhetoric is suspended in the dramatic framework of the opening and closing lines. For another, the argumentative section of the poem has an overabundance of rhetorical quality for the job at hand; no one needs such carefully wrought rhetoric in talking to himself. The presence of rhetorical organization in excess of actual need makes a kind of ideal rhetoric, detached for contemplation; in the same way any metrical structure is an excess of rhythm with respect to the relatively modest rhythmical needs of actual rhetoric. Perhaps Sidney had in mind that this well-ordered internal rhetoric might also be of use in a process of external rhetoric whereby he reminded readers of their ultimate values, but this does not reduce the poem to external rhetoric either.

I have so far chosen my examples of rhetorical structure in poetry from a rather narrow range: two poems by the same Renaissance poet. The Renaissance is of course the great period for the use of formal rhetoric in poetry, and poetry since the Romantic period is sometimes characterized as antirhetorical. Is rhetorical analysis of value in the study of modern poetry? I believe that it is of value, though its importance varies from poem to poem. But rhetorical structure is less obvious in modern poetry and does not lend itself to brief exposition.[4] The passionate meditation of a Yeats produces remarkable rhetoric, but the rhetoric is often in the service of a dialectical or even dramatic structure, as "The Second Coming" will show.

The rhetoric of the opening section of this poem would have been recognizable to Aristotle or Cicero. The famous opening image of the falcon turning in the widening gyre seems at first glance a simple narrative statement. The next few lines, however, seem to eliminate the likelihood of a narrative framework for the poem, and to make the opening statement an instance of rhetorical feigned example, as well as an instance of the principle that you should begin with something arresting.

The speaker proceeds to state his case by amplification, originally a device not for stretching out the poem, but for giving grandeur and impressiveness to a subject. An image of centrifugal force getting out of hand very likely provides an underground link in the first four and possibly first six lines, with their remarkable juxtapositions of concrete example with highly general statements, of abstract language with metaphor. These prepare the way for statement which is quite abstract but nonetheless rhetorically effective in lines 6-8; "The best lack all conviction, while the worst/ Are full of passionate intensity." An analysis of the rhetorical effect of the whole passage would certainly have to pay close attention to style and particularly to the use of short, unexpanded sentences.

But though this opening section comes to seem like a very successful example of traditional rhetoric, the rest of the poem does not work out in the same way. The ejaculation of line 11, and the following two lines which report an event as it is taking place, show that the original impression was correct. The opening of the poem was not publicly oriented rhetoric designed to prove, but the report of an intuition of contemporary anarchy so strong it has compelled heightened speech in traditional rhetorical mode. The speaker is a seer, not a rhetorician. The rhetorical argument is seen to be an aspect of a small dramatic action, the confrontation of seer and world which culminates in a vision of the world to come.

After the vision disappears at line 18, the seer reflects on it once again by having recourse to rhetorical habits of thinking. The last four and a half lines show the seer convincing himself by the use of Aristotle's "example," which is slightly different from our modern notion of example in that it argues not just from the particular to the general but back to the particular again. The argument from example gives instances of what has happened in the past to show that the same sort of thing will happen again in the future. The concluding question suggests the rhetoric of warning or of prophecy.

Yeats's poem begins with a rhetorical stance, moves into drama, and manages to sound rhetorical again at the end. This is a curious reversal of Sidney's more common practice in both his poems, where the poem begins with the dramatic situation and moves into rhetoric; "Leave Me O Love" completes the circle by returning to the dramatic framework at the end. I do not know the significance of these facts; we could use detailed studies of the way rhetorical structure operates in many different poems. Such studies would make a contribution to the building of that really literary literary history so long advocated by René Wellek.

In the process of making such studies, we would no doubt find that the methods of rhetorical analysis always need reexamination and refinement. Modern poetry in particular posits rhetorical situations not foreseen by Aristotle. To account for the way that rhetoric functions in modern poems would not only enlighten us about the history of poetry, it would also help us to develop a more adequate poetics.

NOTES

1. Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 105 and "Preface."

2. The existence of internal rhetoric was recognized by Aristotle when he gave the same names *(dianoia* and *lexis)* to the thought and style of the characters in the *Poetics* as he gave to the thought and style of the rhetorician proper in the *Rhetoric*. He makes it clear that in poetry the thought and style belong to the characters, not to the poet (1450^{b}5-15); he does not treat the poem from the point of view of external rhetoric.

3. But though there may be persuasive purpose, there is no argument on this level; the speaker asserts the unfairness of earthly lovers but does not try to prove it except by the implication that he speaks from experience. For this reason epideictic seems a more appropriate category than forensic.

4. I have elsewhere attempted rhetorical analysis of a modern poem, in "Grammar and Rhetoric in Criticism," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, III (1961), 144-157.

An Exercise in Prose Style

Walker Gibson

We have been hearing a good deal of rhetoric lately about rhetoric, and I take it most of us feel that this is mostly a good thing. At the very least, the fashion for rhetoric has provided a slight change of scene, and like most changes of scene it is refreshing. Teachers who have been around for a while can recall other fashionable changes in the recent past; while none of them exactly solved all our problems, they were at least temporarily enlightening and they provided some refreshment of spirit. At my university our English department has just moved its offices by a couple of blocks, and quite aside from the fact that our new quarters are considerably more posh than most English teachers are accustomed to, the very move itself has been a source of new dignity and delight. So it may be with rhetoric. To put the matter in the humblest way possible: so long as we keep moving our methods and manners, we must, let us hope, be doing something right.

But we do not need to be all that humble.

Let me be concrete about such refreshment as I have myself been experiencing in recent weeks, thanks to the new, really the very old, rhetoric. Having selected one of the new rhetoric-inspired textbooks, I find myself this fall teaching Plato's *Phaedrus* to a class of average freshmen. What a pleasure it is, for teacher and student, to find Socrates saying so many things so immediately relevant. I mention one. You recall that in that dialogue Socrates utters an eloquent speech defending the lover over the nonlover, and in doing so he finds it necessary to talk about the immortality of the soul. Any reference to the immortality of the soul is likely to leave an average freshman uneasy not to say hostile, and in this prejudice I am on the side of the freshman. But see how Socrates introduces the topic:

> To tell what the soul really is would be a matter for utterly superhuman and long discourse, but it is within human power to describe it briefly in a figure; let us therefore speak in that way.

And there follows the magnificent and elaborate figure of the charioteer and the pair of winged horses. Here of course Socrates faces, with characteristic charm and good humor, an essential quandary about language and about metaphor. If only one could *tell* what the soul really *is*! Perhaps it is an injustice to Plato to add: if only one could tell what *anything* really is! In any case, the student who can recognize that to say what things "really are" is quite literally superhuman has already grasped a fact about language and reality that I, as a freshman myself many years ago, never dreamed of. And if the student, emulating Socrates, can thereupon be forthright and self-conscious in choosing his logic, his metaphor, his style, then surely he is on the way to wisdom. "Let us therefore speak in that way."

Socrates ends the dialogue, you may remember, by attacking the very value of writing itself. It is a sobering attack, though doubtless very wholesome for the teacher of rhetoric and his student.

> Writing, Phaedrus, [Socrates says] has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words: you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself.

Can we imagine a more alarming statement about the nature of writing than that? Here are some serious misgivings about the fixed quality of written matter as against the flexible nature of oral speech, with its tones of voice and kinesics, its ability to respond to feedback. In Marshall McLuhan's much discussed new book, *Understanding Media*, there are some similar doubts about the written word, though in his case the alternatives are more spectacular than oratory or spoken conversation: they are the telephone and radio, tape recorder and TV. As long as we are the slaves of the printing press, says McLuhan, we will see the world in nice linear blocks of justified type. But the new media define a different world, involving the listener or viewer in versions of experience that are simply foreign to the reader. The medium, he says, *is* the message.

If one wished to raise a question about the future of writing, we could cite McLuhan or we could cite Socrates, but in either case we are forced to scrutinize assumptions that few of us have often questioned. Insofar as our current interest in rhetoric leads to such scrutinies, it seems to me all to the good.

But it is not altogether seemly to insist—to this of all audiences—that the future of the written word may be dim. If indeed the teacher of composition is becoming obsolete, we are all bravely behaving as if we thought it not so. For our purposes, I assume blandly that the written word is here to stay a while longer, and I propose to offer here a modest, practical contribution to our rhetorical revival. What I am about to present is little more than a Teaching Aid, an exercise, for conveying to students something about *choice* in prose style.

There is an analogy between what rhetoricians have had to say about style and the earlier pronouncements from scholarship in linguistics. The most conspicuous practical effect of linguistics on classroom procedures and attitudes surely has been our increasing reluctance to use those dirty words, *good* and *bad*, our renewed awareness that there are various kinds of language appropriate to various human predicaments. (Obviously no novel discovery—but it has now begun to penetrate into classrooms where formerly a black-and-white schoolmarmism about language prevailed.) The analogy for rhetoricians and the study of style lies in the equally commonplace truism that there is no easily defined or absolute good or bad style, but many styles appropriate to countless occasions. Such relativism makes the teacher's job not easier, of course, but harder. We hear much of the desirability of showing to students the variety of his choices, or options, as the word often is. Robert Gorrell puts it well in the current issue of the *4C's Journal:*

> A theory of rhetoric attempts to describe accurately and consistently and fully what happens; practical rhetoric is concerned with choices. The teacher of writing is concerned with the effects of different grammatical alternatives, so that he can offer advice about which choices to make for different circumstances.

Now my problem, like yours I hope, is severely pragmatic. How can I, as a teacher, dramatize for my students "the effects of different grammatical alternatives"? How can I show my students that their problem as writers is not a matter of learning the right language, whatever that is, and eschewing the wrong, but instead a matter of being aware of the possible options and choosing with wisdom and self-consciousness?

My exercise or teaching aid occurs in three stages.

I begin with the first day of class in the fall—a day when many of us like to have our students write something there and then. What shall it be? "My Summer Vacation". Not quite, but I offer a topic almost as corny and as disarming. "Write me a few sentences," I say to them, "in which you describe the circumstances of your birth and early life, as if you were beginning some sort of autobiography. Just a few sentences. Ten minutes."

Samples from these effusions, dittoed and distributed at the next class, comprise of course a display of stylistic miscellany. One can begin one's task of demonstrating the basically dramatic character of all expression by asking the students to describe or classify the various voices created by the quotations before them. There are sure to be a few jokers, some traditional literary types, some solemn tones, an illiterate or two—the usual assortment.

I illustrate from my own current batch of freshmen. Here for example is the pretentious literary manner so familiar to us all:

> September evenings are cool and breezy in Illinois, relieving the hot

> hours of the day. Autumn is near and the land awaits anxiously for the new season to begin.
>
> It was then that I came.

Here is another voice using the same word *land* but with an ironic sense of cliché:

> September 10, 1946, was a rainy, miserable, stormy day in Orange, N.J. At four minutes after the hour of noon, a new voice (lyric soprano, I believe) was heard in the land.

At a much lower level of sophistication, students give us the pieties they think we must be looking for.

> When a baby is born into a family it is a time of great happiness. It is a time when your parents can pass on to you, all the ideals and values they have learned through the years.

Some young students, in response to an assignment that seems to reach them where they live, will give us a collage of memories that is perhaps better and more moving even than it was meant to be.

> Shortly after my third birthday my sister was born, I wet my bed, and the following Christmas I received a rocking horse. About that time our Irish Setter bit the milkman and had puppies. The lady next door used to give us stale ginger snaps. Then, there was the year of the guppies, a bee stung me, my tooth came out and my father died.

This is all pleasant enough, but of course it says little more than that the world is full of a number of creatures, and that we all pose ourselves before one another in different attitudes, choosing our rhetoric accordingly. My next step—stage two—will perhaps seem a little more respectable, for it is more conventionally literary. Here are two other writers who purport to say something about the circumstances of birth and early life.

Passage 1

> Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.
>
> In consideration of the day and hour of my birth, it was declared by the nurse and by some sage women in the neighborhood who had taken a lively interest in me several months before there was any possibility of our becoming personally acquainted, first that I was

> destined to be unlucky in life; and secondly, that I was privileged to see ghosts and spirits: both these gifts inevitably attaching, as they believed, to all unlucky infants of either gender born towards the small hours on a Friday night.

Passage 2

> I am an American, Chicago born—Chicago, that somber city—and go at things as I have taught myself, free-style, and will make the record in my own way: first to knock, first admitted; sometimes an innocent knock, sometimes a not so innocent. But a man's character is his fate, says Heraclitus, and in the end there isn't any way to disguise the nature of the knocks by acoustical work on the door or gloving the knuckles.
>
> Everybody knows there is no fineness or accuracy in suppression: if you hold down one thing you hold down the adjoining.
>
> My own parents were not much to me, though I cared for my mother. She was simple-minded, and what I learned from her was not what she taught, but on the order of object lessons. She didn't have much to teach, poor woman.

A class invited to describe the narrator in each of these passages should have little difficulty producing at least a few primitive distinctions. The first narrator sounds old-fashioned, they will say, the second more up-to-date. The first one shows considerable wit—perhaps they will mention the play of "to begin my life with the beginning of my life." The second narrator is almost dead serious. The first one is easy with the reader, at ease with himself—the word *urbane* may appear. The second narrator is tense, absorbed with himself, and doesn't seem to be giving the reader much attention at all. Other suggestions will certainly crop up among reasonably interested students—for instance, the proposition that the first narrator is British and traditionally educated, while the second, obviously American, is self-educated, independent, perhaps younger. The expressions "chip-on-the-shoulder" and "self-made man" have appeared in reference to the second narrator. It is a difference between saying "I record that I was born . . ." and "I will make the record in my own way."

Whatever descriptions of the narrators the students are able to provide, either more or less than I have suggested, the question *why* is of course crucial. What is it in the language of the passages that tells us what sort of person is talking? What is there in the way they put sentences together that tells us what we say we know about their characters and backgrounds?

Once you get past the business of plain statement—after all, one of them *says* he was born in Chicago—it is possible to focus some attention on a few rhetorical matters, asking only for what the students are able, with whatever prodding, to supply themselves. One distinction they seem to identify fairly easily is a difference in verb forms: there are some half dozen passive verbs in passage 1, none at all in passage 2. What does this imply about the kind of person talking, his relation to his subject? (Some students will have forgotten what a passive verb is, naturally, but this discussion, by providing a little practical usefulness for the term, may remind them that a nodding acquaintance with a modest grammatical vocabulary may actually be worth something in talking about writing. Note too that I am operating only within conventional terms of traditional grammar.) The uses of subordination may occur to the students, for in the first passage a good deal more than half of the text occurs inside subordinate clauses, whereas in the second it is a much smaller fraction. Does this suggest, for passage 1, a speaker who knows and is ready to assert differences between what's important and what isn't? The *position* of subordinate constructions in the sentence is significant: our first speaker consistently begins his sentences with subordinate clauses and phrases, the second begins with subjects and verbs. A reading of that balanced phrasing in the opening sentence of passage 1 ought to suggest a mind that knows just what it's going to say before it opens its mouth. A sentence from passage 2 will dramatize the difference: "My own parents were not much to me, though I cared for my mother." The clause at the end of the sentence, occurring almost as an afterthought, supports the colloquial voice almost as much as the vocabulary does, or the message.

What else might students notice here, in a rhetorical way, to help explain their understanding of who is addressing them in these two passages? They may mention that the first passage seems to "flow" (this is their word), while the second is periodically interrupted. Those dashes in the first sentence of passage 2 may be mentioned in evidence; again it is a willingness to intrude with an afterthought or qualification, as in colloquial speech. Supporting the same impression are the contractions of the second passage—"she didn't have much to teach, poor woman." This device would be unthinkable in the mouth of our first speaker, for all his ease and his good humor.

So much for stage two of this exercise—you may all be adding other distinctions of this kind, and the list may be increased as long as you and your students can stand it. We should now have illustrated for them our faith that an understanding of style has something to do with concrete matters of grammar and rhetoric. Now—stage three—how can this faith, at this crude level, be applied to the students' own composition?

The students return to their own statements about birth and early life. They are to rewrite those statements—twice. They are not to alter their vocabulary or their content any more than convenient, but they are to follow certain rules that the class discussion has listed. For example, in their first rewriting, one might ask them to put half of their verbs in the passive voice, more than half of their statement in subordinate clauses, place some subordination ahead of the subject-verb structure in their sentences, and use no contractions. Their second rewriting, of course, would proceed contrariwise: use no passive verbs, little subordination, place subordination after the subject-verb, interrupt the syntax with a dash or two, and include a few contractions. One can then ask them, in whatever way seems desirable, to observe and describe what has happened to their statement—and to themselves—as they have changed their rhetoric.

A few—probably not many—may discover, through such a mechanical game of word-play, a way of expressing themselves that seems improved over their original phrasing. But that is not the whole point. The point is to illustrate, even in this heavyhanded way, the fact of choice. Some, a surprising number actually, will discover that their own original rhetoric was much closer to that of Dickens than to that of Bellow. For such students, it is as important to see the value of another style as it is for the student who never subordinated in his life to try on the more formal dress of Victorian prose. In any case, the making of a decision about one's rhetoric has consequences—that is the lesson of the day. And some of the consequences have to do with self-discovery or self-creation. The question of whether I place my clause before or after my subject-verb, or between my subject and verb (as in this very sentence), has something to do with the kind of person I present myself as, before my reader.

What actually do students produce when put through this particular pressure cooker? I illustrate with two examples, aware how disappointing these fragments are likely to sound in the light of my pretentious ambitions in this exercise. Yet the contrasts in tone are obvious enough. The first one is by a young man already pretty literary:

> It would certainly be an interesting affair to relive one's early life with the awareness and consciousness that is gained with time and with constant receptivity to those daily experiences which become precious only in memory and nostalgia. The summer of 1947 . . .

First rewriting:

> If one were to live one's early life with the awareness and consciousness that is gained with time, the experience would certainly be an interesting one.

Second rewriting:

> Why isn't anybody aware of what's going on around him when he's young? I want to relive those early years. It would be interesting to know what I missed.

My second student offers a plainer style to begin with:

> In March, 1947, I was born as the second child in our family. My sister, three and one half years older than I, had been a war baby; and my parents felt that two children were enough for anyone, thus sealing my fate as the "baby" of the family. Our family circumstances at the time were rather modest; my father was the proprietor of a small business . . .

First rewriting:

Since my sister, a war baby, had been born three and one half years before I was, and since it was felt by my parents that two children were enough for anyone, when I was born in March 1947 as the second child in our family my fate as the "baby" was . . .

Second rewriting:

We weren't exactly the most opulent family at the time. My father—he was a small businessman—owned a service station, and the house we lived in wasn't exactly upper-middle class.

* * *

One or two final comments. With exercises like this, as most teachers well know, it is possible to remind our students, and ourselves, that our professional activity is not always divisible into three parts. There is much to be said for defining the study of English as the study of language, literature, and composition—but there is more to be said for defining it as all three at once. Obviously one can't operate three-dimensionally all the time, but an exercise like the one I have been describing may show our students that some rudimentary knowledge of grammar is a nice thing to have when you talk about literature, and that the grammar you use as a reader-critic of literature may be useful to you as a writer. It is one of the virtues of our new concern for rhetoric that it is not easily pigeonholed in any of our three areas of English.

I would also add a good word for playing games with style. I spoke of this exercise as a "mechanical game of word-play," and to an extent it is only that. But word-play is also a serious business of life, as students ought to know well after moving around from physics lab to history lecture to art seminar. After all, they take courses called "*The* History of Western Civilization," and they must be aware how playful language like that has to be if it is to stay sane. When we talk with one another aloud, we can build a little tone and irony into our voices and remind one another of the playfulness of it all. But writing prose comes harder. Socrates is a little severe about the shortcomings of written expression, but surely he is right when he pleads for playfulness:

> The man who thinks that in the written word there is necessarily much that is playful, and that no written discourse, whether in metre or in prose, deserves to be treated very seriously . . .—that man, Phaedrus, is likely to be such as you and I might pray we ourselves may become.

And Phaedrus, that amiable straight man, answers, "By all means that is what I wish and pray for." I hope it is not frivolous for me to conclude, as a teacher of rhetoric: that is what we all wish and pray for.

Teaching Rhetorical Analysis

Richard Braddock

Rhetoric is the word these days, at least with us teachers of freshman English. And as it was with *semantics, propaganda analysis, communication skills, language arts,* and *structural linguistics,* some of us who argue for increased emphasis on rhetoric are a little hazy about what we are arguing for. I will try to clarify what rhetoric means by explaining some of the things rhetoric teachers do which other teachers tend not to do. If I seem to sophisticated rhetoricians to belabor the obvious, I apologize; what is coming is not addressed to them. If they continue to follow these remarks, they will recognize that I am willfully reviewing here some of the basic considerations of rhetoric. The better speech instructors have been teaching these considerations for years, and I am indebted to a number of them for some of these notions, many of which they, in turn, obtained from certain classic writers.

Webster's Seventh defines *rhetoric* as "the art of speaking or writing effectively; specifically, the study of principles and rules of composition formulated by ancient critics." If you are not familiar with the "principles and rules" of the "ancient critics," this definition may leave you in the dark. You conceivably could think the definition refers largely to the mechanics of writing or of voice production and articulation. The key word in the *Webster's Seventh* definition is *composition,* in the sense of composing one's thoughts into effective writing or speech. Thus, not all composition teachers are rhetoricians; unfortunately, many who call themselves composition teachers are primarily concerned with correct usage, spelling, and punctuation, not with the composing of thoughts into effective papers.

But teachers who assign paragraphs and longer papers are not necessarily using a rhetorical emphasis. Certainly if they are teaching primarily by giving their students principles and rules to follow and models to emulate, the rhetoric is not very good. For the best rhetoric is concerned not only with the composing of thoughts. It is concerned with the composing of the writer's thoughts for their effect on a particular audience or type of audience. Thus rhetoric suggests much more personal, more communicative dimensions than the writing of compositions largely to fulfill assignments or to put rules into practice.

Rhetoric is sometimes defined as "the art of persuasion." That is understandable to me, for the word *persuasion* somehow keeps alive the sense of a dialogue between a writer and reader, or speaker and listener. The verb *persuade* is transitive, and the object is the reader or listener. But some people are not happy with equating rhetoric and persuasion, for persuasion may seem to suggest the insincere manipulation of an audience by tricks of logic and style. For that reason, some people prefer to use the term *argument*, which may connote a more responsible use of reasoning and evidence than we tend to associate with persuasion. But the verb *argue* can be transitive or intransitive, and we have an expression like "arguing for the sake of arguing." In other words, argument, while suggesting a process more responsible than persuasion, may tend more to neglect the audience. Perhaps these difficulties explain the usefulness of the word *rhetoric*; it does seem to refer to an art for which there is no exact synonym. I personally would define *rhetoric* as "the art of convincing an audience by means of reasoning and evidence." That definition seems to me to include the audience sense implied by persuasion and the ethical dimension implied by argument. It may even admit the inclusion of nonargumentative types of prose—for example, the kind of exposition which Sheridan Baker characterizes as having an "argumentative edge."

Terms which are very useful in teaching rhetoric are *proposition, issues,* and *evidence*. Let us consider each of these, all too briefly, and then examine a freshman theme in the light of these terms. To simplify, let us talk merely in terms of the writer and his audience though what we are thinking about applies as well to the speaker and his audience.

A proposition is the statement of the main idea of an argument; that is, it states what the writer is trying to convince his reader to do or believe. Like a thesis in exposition, a proposition should be clear to the reader, restricted in focus, and usually stated in a simple declarative sentence. Whereas a thesis presents an idea of which the writer thinks the reader needs to be informed or reminded, a proposition presents a controversial idea which the reader disagrees with or at least does not accept. In other words, if a reader already agrees with a writer's main idea, the writer does not have much of a proposition.

Many immature writers err in using propositions which are not restricted enough. They may try to convince an audience, for example, that "High school does not prepare a student adequately for college." They should be taught to recognize that such a statement suggests, in effect, "No high school prepares any student adequately for any college." They should then be taught to restrict the proposition to the limits of their own experience. The proposition probably should be something like this: "Our mathematics program at Central High is not preparing us adequately to take calculus at the State University." If propositions are not restricted in some such fashion, they tend to produce compositions which are overgeneral, oversimplified, and overobvious.

Basically, there are two types of proposition. The first is the proposition of fact or value. The examples given above are propositions of fact. To convince a reader of the last example, a writer would have to show him what is required in order to take calculus at the State

University, then show him that the mathematics program at Central High does not prepare him adequately for these requirements.

A proposition of value is a statement like "John Jones is a good student." Such a statement requires a writer to clarify criteria of a good student and then to show that John Jones fulfills those criteria. Notice that each of these propositions requires the writer to analyze what he is considering. He must ask "What does it take to be true?" or "What does it take to be good?" or whatever other quality or value he is concerned with. Beyond that, if he truly wishes to convince, he must ask "What does it take *in the eyes of my audience*?" For example, if his readers tend to believe that a good student has some intellectual curiosity which he pursues independently of his teachers, the writer will not convince his readers by confining his criteria to doing assignments on time and not whispering in class. When a writer wishes his readers to employ a criterion they would not usually consider, he has a rhetorical challenge which can heighten the interest and value of the composition which follows. He may have to argue, then, for the very basis of his argument.

The second type of proposition is the proposition of policy. Here is an example: "The Central High world literature course should include study of the Bible as literature." Notice that the word *should* is present or implied in any proposition of policy.

The analysis of an argument over policy differs from one over fact or value. A responsible analysis of a proposition of policy leads a writer to consider the issues which exist between himself and his audience. Since I have dealt with the matter of issues in detail in the October 1965 *College Composition and Communication,* I will not belabor you with a full explanation now. Suffice it to say here that it is difficult genuinely to convince someone if you do not take into account his predispositions—his hopes and values, his reservations and fears. For that reason, it makes great sense to have a writer discuss with some of his prospective readers the reasons why they tend to disagree with him about a proposition of policy he intends to argue. The writer's paper then becomes in considerable measure a refutation of their reasons, and the paper consists, in part at least, of a series of little arguments over the issues involved in the large proposition. Each of these little arguments may be a paragraph, with a topic sentence which turns out to be a proposition of fact or value.

Here is an outline of a theme I will ask you to read a little later.

Proposition: The State of Iowa should make the practice of chiropractic illegal.

I. Although some people point out that chiropractors receive medical training, the fact is that they do not receive enough now and are not likely to raise their standards enough in the immediate future.

II. Although some people believe that chiropractors do very little harm, the fact is that chiropractic treatment often harms vital parts of the body.

III. Although some people believe that chiropractors are not as expensive as doctors, the fact is that chiropractic treatment is expensive.

IV. Although some people believe that the faith "healing" of chiropractors is beneficial, the fact is that it is not beneficial.

Let us overlook for now two obvious problems in this student's analysis: the body of her paper does not seem to maintain the focus of her proposition on the State of Iowa, and she does not explicitly show that there is a legal precedent for the action she proposes. Her actual theme may develop these two points, even though the outline does not assure us. Please do notice, however, that the supporting statements are controversial, at least in the minds of people who are the patients of chiropractors: The topic sentences, that is, do not present facts, but propositions of fact. It is obvious that the girl who wrote this paper was taking into consideration the readers whom she had to convince, those who did not agree with her proposition.

It is also obvious, however, that the people who defend chiropractors will not accept the writer's topic sentences above as proof. In each case, she needs first to clarify what it takes–to receive inadequate training, to harm the vital parts of the body, to be expensive, and to not be beneficial. Then she needs to show that chiropractors fulfill those criteria. In other words, she needs to give evidence to substantiate her reasoning. She needs to support her minor propositions with evidence.

One type of evidence consists of the opinions of authorities. To be convincing, of course, opinions should be based on the direct observation of unbiased authorities who are competent in the area on which they are expressing their opinions. If the audience of the paper on chiropractic is composed largely of people who have not made up their minds on the question, the opinions of acknowledged medical authorities might constitute convincing evidence. The opinions of the student writer should not convince such readers, of course, unless they think she is a medical authority. But if she has no special knowledge of the problem and still writes "In my opinion, chiropractors do not receive adequate medical training," the thoughtful reader will ask "Who do you think you are, anyway?"

If the audience is composed of many people who already favor chiropractic, the writer probably will not be able to use authoritative statements in a convincing way, for her audience will not accept the statements of medical authorities, believing them biased, and she probably will not be able to find an authoritative chiropractor whose statements would be useful to her. Please notice, then, that the convincingness of the opinions of authorities may in large part be directly related to the predispositions of the audience.

The convincingness of specific instances and statistics is less dependent on the predispositions of the audience, unless the audience gets the impression that the writer and his sources are lying. Still the writer must offer enough instances to make his generalizations sensible and often must show that the instances are typical, explaining away negative instances. Practically the same advice holds for the use of statistics, unless the writer depends on the authoritativeness of the person who gathered and interpreted the statistics.

Looking back at the outline of the antichiropractic paper, notice how important it is for the writer to offer specific instances and statistics. For Item I, for example, after showing what medical school catalogs seem to consider adequate medical training, she should offer some statistics on the typical medical training of chiropractors or some data on the medical training of several individual chiropractors who may be considered typical or better than typical. For Item II, she surely must offer some specific instances of people who have been harmed by chiropractors, since probably no statistical surveys have been made of such cases. If she does not, is she not indulging in libelous speculation? If she can do a convincing job of proving Item II, would not that item alone carry much of the burden of her argument? On the other hand, there is little point in her devoting much time to Item III unless chiropractors' charges are exorbitantly high; otherwise, the expense probably provides little basis for making chiropractic illegal. A similar analysis may be appropriate for Item IV. Items III and IV might well be replaced by an item showing that there is some legal precedent for making illegal a practice of which Items I and II are true.

Let us turn now to the paper itself, which is given at the end of this article, to see how the student has supported her ideas. The paper certainly is clear, bluntly so. For a student just out of high school, the writer did a superior piece of analysis. The weakest part of her paper, of course, lies in its failure to provide evidence for her minor propositions. She mentions that "chiropractors take only two or three years of training in their field, while doctors are required to take from eight to ten years or more," but she does not develop that statement in the damaging detail which I suspect one could. Although she does well to explain why it is difficult to learn of cases in which a chiropractor has injured a patient, her failure to supply a single instance of such an injury leaves any skeptical reader totally unconvinced. The other minor propositions are similarly unblessed by evidence. Instead, the paper leans on such expressions as "I believe that" and "It is definitely true that," when the writer has given us no basis for accepting her as an authority. If she were in my class now, I would send her scurrying to the library for the information she so badly needs. I would also have her discuss her ideas—tactfully, of course—with some local chiropractor who is an articulate representative of his calling and who can be understanding with a young person seeking the whole truth.

I hope that I have shown you how a rhetoric teacher can help his students improve the effectiveness of their writing by analyzing their propositions, issues, and evidence. I also hope it is clear that such analyses can often be done most profitably with a fairly specific audience in mind, that it is often very helpful before writing to discuss one's controversial ideas with people who disagree with those ideas.

Health Practices

I believe that the state of Iowa should pass a law making chiropractory illegal. Iowa has one of the most modern medical programs in the United States today. The University hospital is outstanding, not only in its staff and treatments, but also in its welfare program. Any person not able to pay for medical care can receive it free of charge. In this same state, however, in one of our larger cities, Davenport, there is a chiropractic institution.

There are many arguments, of course, for the continued existence of chiropractors. I will give the main arguments and try to show where they are false. First, many well-educated people point out that chiropractors do have medical training. This, obviously, is true, but one wonders how effective or inclusive this training can be when chiropractors take only two or three years of training in their field, while doctors are required to take from eight to ten years or more.

Many people, including some doctors, believe that chiropractors are a "vanishing race." They feel that eventually enough training will be required that chiropractors will be forced to combine with colleges and universities, and will eventually be required to take the same training as doctors. I wonder, however, if we can afford to wait until this happens; if we can take the chance, risk the lives, when a law making this practice illegal would not be an eventual cure but an immediate one. If this is to happen anyway, why should we wait?

Another common belief is that chiropractors do very little real harm. Any doctor can tell you that without the proper knowledge of bones, muscles, and internal organs, any treatment, especially pulling, twisting, bending, or hitting these vital parts of our bodies may be and often is very harmful. True, we do not always hear of this being the case, but people do not necessarily know at the time; and it must be noted that if these people do eventually go to a doctor, they are not too likely to confess that they have been going to a chiropractor before coming to him.

An erroneous belief held by many is that chiropractors are not as expensive as doctors. It is likely, however, that if these people continue to go to the chiropractor, which if they have a real ailment will probably be the case, they will end up spending much more money for much less training, skill, and knowledge and may eventually have to go to the doctor in order to be cured.

Probably one of the most common beliefs is that faith "healing," which constitutes much of the chiropractor's work, is beneficial. It is definitely true that the mental attitude of a patient is exceedingly important both in diagnosing the disease and in curing the patient completely. For this reason, doctors and nurses have been trained in the fields of psychology and psychiatry; chiropractors have not been.

At any rate, faith "healing" is not going to be beneficial to the person, as he eventually comes to rely on his "healer," rather than on himself. The very reason that many psychiatrists limit the sessions with one patient to an average of fifteen is that many more sessions would cause the patient to begin to depend on the psychiatrist to make his decisions for him. If a person is mentally disturbed, then he is in need of a psychiatrist, a trained physician, not a chiropractor.

I firmly believe that Iowa, a leader in medical practices, should not allow chiropractors to stay in existence. Chiropractors can and do cause great harm both to their patients and to the medical profession.

Rationale for a New Curriculum in English*

James Moffett

Unlike other animals, the human baby cannot for some time do for itself. During the first months of utter helplessness and the following years of extreme dependence, the child must get others to do for it. Thus we learn at the outset of life the tremendously important art of manipulating other people. This is the genesis of rhetoric—and it begins before we learn to speak. Crying soon becomes a means of summoning the milk supply or the dry diaper. Later the rhetorical repertory of the child includes vomiting, holding breath, throwing temper tantrums, evacuating inappropriately, whining, wheedling—and obeying. But if this is so, what do we mean when we say we are going to teach rhetoric to students? They are past masters before they even come to school.

To be worth discussing at all at a convention of English teachers, rhetoric must mean something more than forensic argumentation, as it did for Aristotle, and something less than effective communication, as it does for many educators today. The one conception falls far short of the needs of an English curriculum, and the other virtually becomes a synonym for it. For me rhetoric refers to the ways one person attempts to act on another, to make him laugh or think, squirm or shiver, hate or mate. Acting on others through words is merely one species of instrumental behavior in general. Our talk about the world is in the world and of the world; the use of language is a motivated drama. (I'm not speaking to you on this occasion for nothing.) So I assume that there is no such thing as a discourse without a rhetoric, however unconscious or naive it may be; that except for exercises in English courses, every discourse is motivated by something in the speaker and directed toward an audience on whom it is meant to have an impact.

I cannot hope to say anything new to you about rhetoric, however, unless I utter it in the same breath with abstraction. How A tries to act on B through language simply cannot be detached from that whole logical and cognitive operation by which we abstract reality into symbols. Rhetoric is a variable factor of a total process. *What* A is saying is some abstraction of the world. But at the same time we abstract *from* we abstract *for*. Whether I call the green film on the surface of a pond "spring algae" or "scum" is of great rhetorical importance because of the difference in effect on my audience. But choosing "spring algae" or "scum" is a conceptual option entailing different ways of classifying the same physical phenomenon. Any serious analysis of rhetoric resorts to discussion of the abstractive process, as the work of Francis Christensen so well shows, although I wish he had kept it in the context of motive. The designs a speaker has on his audience and the operations he performs on his subject govern jointly every feature of a discourse—from word choice, punctuation, and sentence structure to paragraph development and overall organization. A subject is a *what* but *what for*? So my second assumption is that the rhetorical process occurs only in conjunction with the abstractive process, and neither can be separated from the other. A discourse is intent multiplied by content.

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At this point let me connect this line of thought with another major concern of English teachers today—the search for a central structure in English that can serve to magnetize the whole curriculum. Plenty of structures exist—the lexicographer's word, the linguist's sentence, the logician's paragraph, and the litterateur's form—but none is large enough to accommodate the famous trivium of language, literature, and composition (a nonparallel series if I ever heard one, since composition ought to be an activity, not a corpus). The litterateur's form furnishes the largest context, but the genres and their subdivisions are not detachable from literary criticism and hence cannot apply to most kinds of spontaneous and utilitarian discourse. The word, the sentence, and the paragraph are all substructures lacking precisely that context of purpose and intent which is the heart of rhetoric. I do not see how a teacher can possibly be serious about rhetoric and continue to assign workbook exercises or the writing of isolated sentences and paragraphs. *What for?* This is not composition, it is decomposition.

Although I understand how tempting it is to apply directly some of the very successful codifications about language achieved by linguists, I can only deplore the basing of assignments on structure that does not rise above the level of syntax. How can you teach, not only rhetoric, but style, diction, semantics, or logic within a structure stripped of everything that determines them? Style and diction with no reason for choosing one word or sentence structure over another? Semantics with a meaningless fragment out of context? Logic with one proposition? Abstraction with no subordinates or superordinates except internal words and phrases? What you can teach with the sentence alone are the linguistic codifications themselves but not how to speak or write. To the children who underscore the modifier clusters those exercises must look exactly the same as the diagraming of sentences did to us. And when they make up a sentence or paragraph demonstrating such and such kind of structure, they are not learning what the teacher thinks they are: they are learning that there is such a thing as writing sentences and paragraphs for their own sake, that discourse need not be motivated or directed at anyone, that it is good to write even if you have nothing to say and no one to say it to just so long as what you put down illustrates a linguistic codification. The student learns to dope out the teacher's preference for subordinate clauses and give him what he wants. This is a fine lesson in rhetoric indeed. He will throw in lots of modifier clusters because the teacher will reward him and make him feel good about himself, not because clusters are an appropriate rhetorical ploy in such and such kind of whole, authentic discourse, because he isn't at the time writing any such discourse. He may at some other time of course be asked to write a complete theme, but, so far as I know, the assumption that exercises carry over to real speech and writing has never been proved, even though it is the same old assumption that has always underlain the old-fashioned grammar drills.

The reason I have criticized exercises is that they typify two errors which I think are obstructing the kind of curriculum we would all like. One error is basing assignments on *a* structure instead of on *the* structure. A word, sentence, or paragraph simply cannot do justice to the truth of real discourse. Too small a context actually promotes mislearning that must be undone somewhere else in the curriculum. In this way we constantly work against ourselves for lack of a global rationale. The second error is to focus too much on the subject and not enough on the student. Intent on discovering what language is about we neglect to examine how children learn. To paraphrase Earl Kelley, we build the right facilities, organize the best course of study, work out the finest methods, create the appropriate materials, and then, come September, the wrong students walk through the door. Just as the rhetorical and abstractive processes must be multiplied together to produce a real discourse, the teaching and learning processes must be multiplied together to produce real education, which is a two-way transaction, not a one-way transmission. We must mesh the structure of the subject with the structure of the student.

However much students may vary in genetic and environmental background, they all come equipped with nervous systems built on the same ground plan. Their emotional and cognitive apparatuses work in a *structurally* similar way, however idiosyncratic the results. One generalization that can be made about the way our apparatus works is one I invoked in disapproving the use of exercises: whenever a child learns a certain content he also learns the way of learning that surrounds the content; he gets the hidden message implied by the learning context and emerges with a general disposition that is of a higher level of complexity than the content itself. Thus in an a-rhetorical learning situation, the child learns to discourse a-rhetorically.

Another principle is that we pay attention to and retain what is presented to us only in the measure that we can immediately integrate it into previously built knowledge systems within us. Now of course anything can be *made* relevant, and the child's attention and memory thus trained, by creating a system of instrumental rewards and punishments, in which case he will not relate the things learned to each other, as the teacher intends, but will relate them directly to his status with the teacher.

Piaget has formulated one of the most useful and general laws of learning and one that bears profoundly on rhetoric: the cognitive perspective of the child expands gradually from himself outward so as to incorporate points of view foreign to his initially preferred egocentric outlook, to accommodate audiences remote from himself, and to encompass subjects broader and broader in time and space. A corollary of this law is that decentering, the correction of cognitive perspective, depends very much on feedback from the environment. (Ignoring the structure of the student is, precisely, a failure to decenter and hence a failure of our own rhetoric.) The thought and speech of the child, says Piaget, gradually socialize, adapt to a listener. Adapting to a listener is exactly what successful rhetoric entails; the speaker must embrace the other's world by incorporating his point of view and by speaking his language. Thus Piaget enables us to tie rhetoric to the cognitive processes and to the basic biological fact of adaptation in general.

Since one of the chief ways of influencing others through words is intellectual, by means of our logic, the categories and logical relations the child uses must gradually approximate universal ones. The problem is not that the child begins with no logic and has to acquire some, no more than that he starts life without a rhetoric; but his logic is subjective, unconscious, and unsystematic. The progress he makes in logical and cognitive development is his progress in forging higher abstractions from lower ones and in being able to tell the difference. But the problem here is in understanding what abstraction really is. Primitive thought tends toward very broad categories and propositions (wild generalizations, if you like), so that the use of words and sentences having a large extension or range of applicability may indicate undeveloped rather than sophisticated thought. I'm afraid we teachers are often taken in by pseudo-concepts and pseudo-abstraction, which, incidentally, the too early assigning of exposition naturally invites. Real advances in verbal growth should be measured not only by the extension of the concepts and propositions but by whether they are ranged in a hierarchy of subordinates and superordinates. In other words, discrimination and complexity make the difference. Also the consciousness of abstracting. Hence another principle of growth: the child becomes more and more able to create new classes, range the classes in relation to each other, reclassify, and move with awareness from one level of the hierarchy to another. Above all, abstracting is the processing of matter by mind in stages from the ground up. Each state subsumes the ones below, builds on them, and is in turn subsumed in the next stage. Therefore no stage can be skipped. It follows that students will learn to abstract properly only if they are asked to discourse about some raw material from their own life, for to the extent that assignment topics are preabstracted for them the students are prevented from working their way through the prerequisite stages.

Armed with this double model of the student decentering as he adapts to the outside and ascending as he integrates hierarchical systems, I return now to the meshing of the structure of English with that of the student. What makes it possible to do this is that they have a common substrate owing to the fact that discourse is, after all, a product of our own symbol-making organism and inevitably reflects it, in somewhat the same way that furniture mimics our body and architecture our psyche. My own point of departure several years ago was to classify actual kinds of discourse according to rhetorical distance and abstractive altitude. To make this analysis I had to invoke a concept that could adequately frame it. This concept is what I am going to propose as the master context or superstructure of English.

No doubt you have noticed that I construe English as simply all discourse in our native tongue. For teachers this seems to me to be the only realistic definition. The universe of discourse is staked out by a first person, a second person, and a third person; and their interrelations make up the dynamics of discourse. So the concept I am referring to is the venerable trinity–*I*, *you*, and *it*; informer, informed, and information; narrator, auditor, and story; transmitter, receiver, and message. Like all trinities, this one is a unity–somebody-talking-to-somebody-else-about-something. Indivisible as it is in reality, to talk about it we must divide it. The *I-you* relation is the existential, behavioral, rhetorical relation of speaker and spoken-to. It has primacy over the *I-it* relation, which is symbolic, referential, and abstractive. Cross these two relations and you have some whole, authentic discourse; omit one and you do not. Intent times content. In the new curriculum I am proposing, students would never be asked to create or contemplate anything less than a whole, authentic discourse. But if the units are to be kinds of discourse, what are they and how would they be ordered so as to devise a sequence?

Rhetorical distance and abstractive altitude furnish coordinates by which we can map the universe of discourse. To take rhetorical distance first, if speaker and listener are the same actual person, the activity of the discourse must be silent self-verbalization, better known as thinking. If speaker and listener are two separate people face to face, the activity is vocalizing or speech. If the audience is small and known but situated in another time or place than is the speaker, the discourse must be written. If the audience is large and anonymous, far flung in time and space, the discourse must be written for publication. Now, imagine a speaker discoursing on the same subject but successively to each of these four audiences. Consider the shifts all down the line in all the substructures of the language that must take place each time the audience becomes larger and more remote, or, to calibrate more finely, each time the identity of the audience and its relation to the speaker changes at all. Allusion, diction, punctuation, style, sentence structure, paragraphing, logic–all adjust to what that audience can understand, appreciate, and respond to. If, for example, I were to give this talk over a national television network, as a starter I would have to go through my text and change most of the key nouns.

As the second person recedes from the first, other things happen. Spontaneous discourse becomes deliberate. Feedback becomes slower, more long-range, and more diffuse. Vernacular language gives way to literary language. Private and parochial modes of thought universalize. Ongoing dialogue becomes composed monologue. Because they correspond to a growth schedule, these shifts entailed by increasing separation of speaker from audience would make a good curriculum sequence.

Taking now the abstractive relation of speaker to spoken-about—in order to delineate a similar continuum here, I am going to use verb tenses because they predicate subjects in a time relation to the speaker. But I may regard the Civil War as what happened once upon a time or as what happens whenever an agrarian aristocracy and an industrial democracy try to coexist or as what will happen again if we are not careful. I am exercising a conceptual option. So time difference is another name for level of abstraction. Thus we can create a continuum of shifts in speaker-subject relation according to which level of the hierarchy the speaker has chosen to abstract some raw material to. Compare a record of *what is happening* with a report of *what happened* with a generalization about *what happens* with a theory about *what will, may, or could happen*. Arrayed in this order, these four *what*'s or speaker-subject relations form an abstractive hierarchy in at least two ways. First, if we imagine the same raw material as being originally the subject matter of them all, then it is clear that this matter is being progressively processed by mind in such a way that concrete qualities are ceding to logical properties. Secondly, each stage depends on the preceding one because it subsumes it. A report is a summary of recordings, a generalization is a synthesis of reports, and a theory is a transformation of some generalizations. For example, imagine an on-the-spot recording of what is happening before the guillotine, then an eyewitness account of what happened one day during the French Revolution, then an historical generalization about the Reign of Terror, then a political scientist's theory about revolutions starting right and moving left. This is precisely how abstraction works, and we perform a similar operation all the time in building our own thought structures.

Put another way, if I record what is happening, I produce a drama. If I report what happened, I produce a narrative. If I generalize what happens, I produce an exposition. If I theorize what will, may, or could happen, I produce an argumentation. Redefined, these traditional divisions of discourse are seen as levels of abstraction at which some given raw material may be symbolized. Furthermore, these stages bring to the fore in succession the three essential kinds of logic—the chronologic of ordering things as they happen, the analogic of classifying by similarity and difference, and the tautologic of transforming by relations of classes and propositions. Each kind of logic becomes in turn the organizing principle of the total discourse and further converts the random order of events into the man-made order of his own internal operations.

Returning now to the practical problem of deriving curriculum units—almost any intersection of these progressions identifies a kind of discourse familiar to either literature or everyday communication, usually both. Thus writing *what happens* to a mass audience is formal exposition. Writing to a friend *what happened* is a narrative letter. Vocalizing *what will, may, or could be true* is socratic dialogue. Verbalizing *what is happening* is a kind of sensory interior monologue. The units of the curriculum would be spontaneous monologues and dialogues; letters; diaries; various first person narratives such as autobiography, memoir, and eyewitness accounts; third person narratives such as biography, case histories, chronicle, and history; essays of generalization; and essays of argumentation. Notice that all the techniques of drama and fiction are easily accommodated. Literature and nonliterature would be read and practiced side by side within the same unit so that constant comparison could be made. Thus epistolary fiction would be studied along with actual correspondence and journal fiction along with actual diaries. Under the unit of face-to-face vocalization, plays could be studied along with transcripts of court trials and socratic dialogues.

A spiraled sequence would be created by crossing each of the four stages of the rhetorical progression with each of the four stages of the abstractive progression. Thus a student would tell what happened first in vocal dialogues, letters, and diaries, and then in journalistic reports, biography, and chronicle. Generalizing what happens would proceed from reflective interior dialogue to socratic dialogue to dialectical letters and diaries to formal exposition. Roughly, the sequence teaches how to record, report, generalize, and theorize, in that order. In effect, chronology, analogy, and tautology begin as subjective, shadowy logic buried in sentences and emerge as an explicit organizing principle of the whole discourse.

Professional writing and the students' own productions would be the only texts examined. The substructures of the language would be studied constantly and simultaneously within each kind of discourse. Word choice, punctuation, sentence structure, grammar, paragraphing, and organizational form would be issues every day and would remain in relation to the rhetorical distance and abstractive altitude of the particular discourse at hand. The appropriate teaching method would be a workshop discussion in which the student's efforts to act on a certain audience at a certain level—his theme—would be read and commented on by both the teacher and the other students. Since it is a natural communication model, the discussion itself would come under scrutiny in a modified kind of group dynamics. The very important understanding derived from the lexicographer, the linguist, the logician, and the litterateur would be behind the teacher helping him to exploit the twists and turns of the workshop method. The approach is based on trial and error but with the trials carefully keyed into the